

# GoodFood

MIDDLE EAST

Food to  
*fall in love*  
with

Romantic recipes for  
that special someone

## MOROCCAN MAGIC

Surprisingly simple  
ways to entertain in style

**Perfect presents**  
Valentine gift guide for  
the foodie in your life

## Flavours of Asia

At-home and eat-out ideas  
for Chinese New Year



CREATIVE COOKING



EXPLORE HONG KONG

## INSIDE

- \* Healthy eating made easy
- \* How to bone a leg of lamb
- \* Food safari: Jordanian cuisine



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# NICE CANS!

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# Welcome!



When exactly did Valentine's Day cross over from being the territory of giggly teenagers sharing cards and roses with their crushes, to a full blown grown-up celebration, with lavish dinners, indulgent gifts and romantic holidays all par for the course for couples? I'm not very sure, but hey, I'm not complaining! As long as a celebration revolves around food – and this one does – the more

excuses we have to feast, the better.

Never ones to be left behind, we've made romance our firm focus in this issue – from a simple yet stylish dinner menu if you're staying in (*Love is... good food*, p54), to more elaborate French-themed recipes, if you want to go all out (*Dinner for two*, p58), and our picks of some of the best Valentine's Day dining out options in town (*Flavours of the month*, p16). We've also hand-picked gorgeous gourmet gift ideas for that special someone (*Gifts of love*, p20), and shared five fabulous dessert recipes that the two of you can indulge in (*Treats for two*, p62).

Plus, we've got our usual array of smart suppers, healthy meals that taste as good as they are good for you, creative ways to cook with versatile and nutritious sweet potatoes, and a deceptively easy but delectable Moroccan menu for effortless weekend entertaining – so you've got all your cooking inspiration sorted for the whole month, not just that one special day mid-month!

Speaking of Morocco, I'm delighted to announce the launch of our *Culinary Journeys* Reader Offer, an exciting project that we've teamed up with travel company The World at Her Feet for. We will be inviting you to join us on a series of foodie trips to different destinations around the world throughout 2013, the first of them being Marrakech in March. The trips are offered exclusively to our readers at a very special price, turn to p97 to find out details of how you can sign up. I look forward to discovering Morocco together with you!

In the meantime, have a love-filled February,

*Sudeshna*

## Editor's picks



◆ This darling cake stand is perfect for teatime indulgences, p21.



◆ I'm going to be serving this Moroccan-style butternut and harissa hummous dip the next time I have friends over, p47.



◆ The health benefits of chocolate are all the excuse I need to gorge on some right now! p70.



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# Contents



8

## \*STARTERS

### 6 YOUR SAY

Write in to us with your views and comments.

### 8 FOODIE FILE

All the latest food news, trends and happenings.

### 11 AISLE FILE

Go shopping for gourmet goodies, kitchen gadgets, and gorgeous home décor.

### 12 HERE TO HELP

Expert answers for your cooking questions.

### 13 PRODUCT REVIEW

We review two brands of slow cookers.

### 15 CULINA-READS

Cookbooks, TV shows and app reviews.

### 16 FLAVOURS OF THE MONTH

The best deals and offers on restaurants around town this month.

### 19 TRIED AND TASTED

We review two top romantic restaurants.

### 20 GIFTS OF LOVE

Spoil your loved one with these gorgeous foodie gift ideas.



20



36

## \*HOME COOKING

### 26 READY IN 30

Quick and delicious weeknight suppers.

### 30 A WEEK OF HEALTHY SUPPERS

Eating well was never so easy!

### 34 FIVE WAYS TO FILL A PANCAKE

Simple sweet and savoury fillings to try.

### 35 MAKE ONE, FREEZE ONE

A comforting one-pot meal that will keep.

### 36 SIMPLE, SATISFYING CHINESE

The Chinese New Year is the perfect excuse to experiment with Asian flavours at home.

### 41 KITCHEN NOTES

Essential knowhow for home chefs.

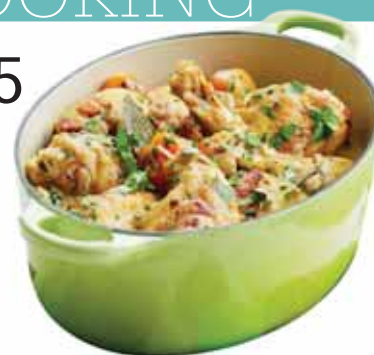
### 42 ONE INGREDIENT, THREE WAYS

Cook three delicious dishes using one versatile ingredient – sweet potato.

### 46 MOROCCAN FEAST FOR A CROWD

Entertain in style with this Oriental spread.

35



### 52 CHEF SKILLS: LEARN TO BONE AND ROLL A LEG OF LAMB

A step by step guide as well as a delicious lamb recipe, from the pros.

### 54 LOVE IS... GOOD FOOD

A simple, yet stylish Valentine's Day menu to rustle up at home.

### 58 DINNER FOR TWO

Traditional French recipes for a romantic Valentine's Day meal.

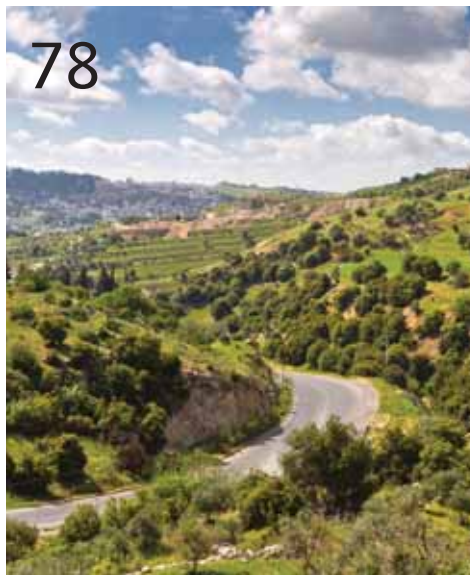
### 62 TREATS FOR TWO

Decadent desserts to indulge in.

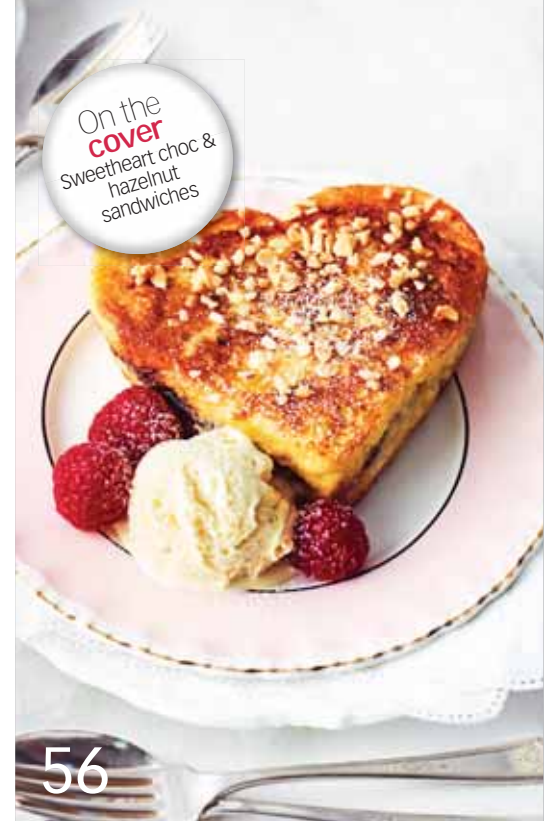




76



78



56

## \*GOURMET LIFESTYLE

### 70 CHOC TALK

Ten things you need to know about chocolate.

### 72 A STAR-STUDED JOURNEY

Celebrity chef Pierre Gagnaire opens up about success and failure.

### 76 MY KITCHEN

Josline Dimpleby takes us through the heart of her home.

### 78 FOOD SAFARI: JORDAN

Discover this fascinating country's cuisine and culture.

### 82 CULINARY CAPITAL

What to expect from the chefs participating in Gourmet Abu Dhabi, 2013.

### 85 TASTE OF THE WORLD

Travel news and global gastronomy.



70

### 87 3 TO TRY: HONG KONG

Dining options you shouldn't miss in this vibrant Asian city.

### 90 POSTCARD FROM PORTO

This Portuguese destination has much to offer food lovers.

### 104 MEET THE BLOGGER

Get to know the face behind the food blog you've been savouring.

## COMPETITIONS & OFFERS

**83** Insinkerator food waste disposal units

**92** Shopping vouchers from Indigo Living

**96** Two-night stay at Ocean View Beach hotel

**102** Dining and brunch vouchers up for grabs

**97 READER OFFER:** Join us on our first Culinary Journey to Marrakech



### Our recipe descriptions

**V** Suitable for vegetarians

**⚙** You can freeze it

**❄** Not suitable for freezing

**Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make

**A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry

**More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks

**Low fat** 12g or less per portion

**Low cal** 500 calories or less per main.

**Superhealthy** Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

**Good for you** Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

**Heart healthy** Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

**1 of 5-a-day** The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving

**Vit C Iron Omega-3 Calcium Folate Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for this symbol:

**P** contains pork

**I** contains alcohol

# Your say

We love to hear from you!



## INSPIRING STORIES

As soon as I saw Antonio Carluccio's name on the cover of the magazine I knew I had to pick up a copy. I'm a big fan of Italian cuisine and have dined at his restaurant quite

a lot. I love reading inspirational stories on chefs or any celebrity personalities, and really liked his story, especially when he talks about how he used to pick mushrooms, and the way he uses different herbs when cooking. I tried Carluccio's Penne giardiniera recipe (*The accidental cook*, January 2013), which was delicious as the spinach was very crispy! I'm planning my travels for the year ahead, and have included Palace Merano in Italy as one of the places to visit as I need a detox vacation, and this spa seems the most appealing to me from the list you featured (*Do a detox spa-cation!* January 2013). I've read great reviews about this retreat on blogs as well, so can't wait to check it out. Looking forward to the February issue of *BBC Good Food ME*!

Zena Shrestha

## FIRST IMPRESSION

I believe first impressions are long-lasting impressions. I picked up a copy of *BBC Good Food ME* magazine for the first time in December and loved the issue. What enticed me to pick it up was the amount of prizes that were up for grabs! After going through the issue, I became a Food Club member online to



## TALK TO US!

Email us on [feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com](mailto:feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com) with your thoughts, views and comments.



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## Star Letter

### CHEF EXTRAORDINAIRE

Having recently dined at Yannick Alléno's restaurant Stay at The One & Only, The Palm – which was superb – I was delighted to read the interesting article about him in *BBC Good Food ME* (*Of restaurants and relationships*, December 2012). I admire his cooking philosophy and style, and how he gives life to old recipes from France, and creates French classics with a twist through the clever play of simple ingredients with innovative presentation. Yannick's recipes are unique and show a style that is his own, while

using inspiration from other European and Asian cooking methods, that he has learned from his experiences and travels as a chef. It is great to see some of the world's leading master chefs like Yannick Alléno open restaurants in the UAE and give us the opportunity to experience fine gastronomic cuisine and exquisite culinary creations.

Fahad Shalabi



Win!

The writer of the Star Letter wins a fabulous **Kenwood tri-blade hand blender**. With over 21 functions, including a blending attachment, stainless steel balloon whisk, and calibrated chopper with lid, this all-in-one hand blender is dishwasher-safe and is the perfect kitchen companion, ideal for everything from quick chopping, blending to whisking for cakes and soups.



keep myself up to date with all the news *BBC Good Food ME* has to offer!

Lana Sabljarevic

## NEW BEGINNINGS

I found the diet delivery programme feature (*The Diet Diaries*, January 2013) interesting, as I would like to shed a few pounds, and need help! This month's magazine is great as there

are lots of nutritious recipes and interesting articles. I made the Grilled peaches with crumble and ice cream (*Grill Gourmet*, January 2013) and the Chicken with mustard lentils (*Make it tonight*, January 2013) recipes, both of which turned out great and were a hit with my family.

Silvia Florns



## We asked you...

Facebook poll

**What is your ultimate romance food?**

88% Chocolate

8% Lobster

4% Strawberries





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# Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Paul café



Parsli



Traders Vics

## DINE IN THE CITY

✳ Popular Polynesian bar Trader Vic's has opened its doors in Dubai Festival City, offering Japanese specialities from the live sushi bar – exclusive to this venue – and signature dishes such as the Beef chocho, to relish while sitting at the outdoor terrace that overlooks the waterfront. Call 04-2559000.

✳ Parsli, the recently opened cafe at the Aldar HQ building at Al Raha Beach, Abu Dhabi (above right), offers a healthy menu with Mediterranean flair. Devised by an in-house nutritionist, all the dishes on the menu are low in fat, sodium and sugar; made from fresh produce; and are either steamed, baked or grilled. Free home delivery is available within Abu Dhabi, call 02-5565637.

✳ Celebrity chef Marco Pierre White has opened the second outlet of one of the oldest seafood restaurants in the world, Wheeler's of St. James's London, outside of the UK, in the bustling DIFC. Try traditional British seafood dishes such as Prawn cocktail, Smoked salmon and Dover sole, at this elegant restaurant. Call 04-3860899.

✳ Residents living in the capital can get a taste of home-style French food – think French pastries including mille-feuille, and classics like Le Croque-Monsieur – as the first Paul bakery and restaurant outlet has opened its doors in Bawabat Al Sharq shopping mall in Baniyas, Abu Dhabi. Call 02-5828300.



### SINGAPORE SURPRISE

Set off on a gastronomic journey through Singapore, as you taste the Asian island country's delicious cuisine at the Singapore food festival, taking place across all Lulu hypermarkets in the UAE, from February 20 to March 3. Singaporean celebrity chef Violet Oon will be in attendance to conduct cooking demonstrations of authentic dishes such as Singaporean chilli crab, Satay and Laksa and unique Singaporean ingredients – from curry pastes to noodles – will be available for sale throughout the festival.

*I've long believed that good food, good eating, is all about risk. Whether we're talking about unpasteurised Stilton or raw oysters, food, for me, has always been an adventure.*

– Anthony Bourdain, celebrity chef, food writer and TV personality





## YOGA-LICIOUS!

Looking for a way to shape up? Holistic lifestyle service company Liv2Lead, and Fitness and Food, a wellness solution provider, have teamed up to offer a series of yoga and nutrition workshops, starting February 4, at Motion fitness centre, Umm Suqueim. Hosted by an expert nutritionist and yoga instructor, the morning workshops will offer advice on what superfoods to eat, combined with a yoga session, along with a nutritious breakfast and goodie bag to take home. Dhs485 per person, visit liv2lead.com for details and to book.



## This just in:

**We heart this whimsically pretty porcelain teapot from French design house La Marelle – drinking tea just got a lot more fun! Dhs510, at Harvest Home.**

# Ola, good food!

Brazilian seems to be the next big thing in the UAE restaurant scene, with multiple new restaurants opening up. Fogueira at Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence and Frevo at Fairmont The Palm Dubai, have joined all-time Latin American favourites Toro-Toro at Grosvenor House Dubai, Pachanga at Hilton Jumeirah Beach Resort, and Hilton Ras al Khaimah's Pura Vida, to provide the authentic Brazilian churrascaria experience, serving succulent meats carved at the table in espeto corridor style. We recommend making a beeline for these restaurants to discover what more this cuisine has to offer!



## Latte on the go

The newly opened Starbucks drive-through café on Jumeirah Beach Road is exactly what we need for a quick on-the-go caffeine fix en route to work!



## FOODIE FESTIVAL ALERT

Tickets for Dubai's best known food festival, Taste of Dubai 2013, are on sale now. Taking place at Dubai Media City from March 14-16, the event will feature a variety of restaurants serving their signature specials, including new names such as Armani Ristorante, Armani Amal, Thipatra and Asado, as well as cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs Gary Rhodes, Richard Sandoval and Food Network's Reza Mohammed and Jenny Morris.

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# Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, foodie accessories, home décor and more.



These pastel pink butterfly mugs with branch stand will not only save counter space but also give it a chic, feminine touch. Dhs349, at **THE ONE**.



This classic red Le Creuset teapot with mugs set is perfect for pulling out the next time a girlfriend comes by to catch up over a cuppa. Dhs289, at **LAKELAND**.



Get the kids started early with a cute little Weaving Hope Cooking play set from **ZAZEEZOU**. The environment-friendly, fair-trade produced kit includes a cooker hob with two velcro buttons, pan with lid, frying pan, spatula and spoon holders, as well as a food set including a basket, fried egg, fruit and veg and other ingredients. What's more, it is portable, making it perfect for out-of-home play dates. Priced at Dhs320.



Multi-tasking appliances are always a hit with us! This Thermochef multifunctional food processor can be used to chop, mix, whip, grind, mince, whisk, heat, knead, steam and weigh, as well as cook food simultaneously, in a spacious 2-litre jar. It also comes with a recipe booklet – how's that for an all-in-one solution? Dhs2,760, at **CITRUSTV.COM**.



How gorgeous is this steel tray by Emma Bridgewater? Whether you use it to serve breakfast in bed, or coffee and cake, it will brighten up your day! Dhs190, at **HARVEST HOME**.



Forget scraping honey off teaspoons, these quirky Help honey wands make drizzling delicious honey over anything fun! Dhs26 each, at **WAMLI.COM**.



Move over, regular water! Make your own flavour-infused water with this 360 degree water jug by Pil Bredahl. The dishwasher-safe jug automatically opens when you pour water, leaving flavouring ingredients such as lemon, mint or even ice cubes intact inside. Dhs310, at **SYNCARTS.COM**.

Keep a pack of these low-salt, cholesterol-free Lucky natural pistachios in your desk drawer for a healthy midday snack. Dhs29, at



**MILK AND HONEY**.

We will be upgrading our Nespresso machine to the sleek new Gran Maestria. Available in dark grey titanium and platinum, the machine has a large capacity water tank and capsule container, automatically powers off after nine minutes if not active, includes a cup heater, and takes just 25-30 seconds to pre-heat. Four gourmet recipes are also available to make sure you get a velvety crema with your coffee. Dhs3,500, at **NESPRESSO BOUTIQUES**.



# On test: Slow cookers

Essential home gadgets reviewed.



## Lakeland Timeless oval slow cooker (2.5 litres)

Slow cookers are simple to use, and so convenient too! Ideal for people who work, you can simply switch on the slow cooker before going to office and your supper is ready the minute you get home. This dishwasher-safe cooker has a large stew pot sized electric machine with a removable inner ceramic serving dish, cool-touch handles, and a glass-lid. There is a Low, High and Automatic heat dial to cook dishes according to the temperature and time required for recipes.

**What we liked:** The great thing about slow cookers is that you can make just about any one-pot dish, and simply leave the cooker on for hours. We decided to make a vegetable stew, and since all the ingredients were sitting for a long time, the vegetables were tender while the sauce – made from broth – was delicious. The cooker is also low-risk, with no danger of burning food. Two sizes are available for this

product; the compact size is good enough for two, whereas the family size slow cooker is ideal for a large family. The fact that the inner dish is removable, means you can simply take it out of the cooker and serve right out of it. For its price point, it is very reasonable, as it has the energy consumption of a household light bulb. Since it is small and compact, it fits well on a standard sized kitchen countertop, and can easily be stored in a kitchen cupboard.

**What we didn't like:** Obviously the slow cooker is not for those who are in a rush, as you need to allow everything to cook for a few hours before it is ready to be eaten. I thought the pot and metal elements of the cooker were slightly flimsy, and would break if you were to mishandle them while washing or storing away.

**To buy:** From Dhs115, available at Lakeland.

### User tip

Be careful not to touch the ceramic bowl immediately after turning off, as it can be deceptively hot.



## Kenwood slow cooker multi cooker (6.5 litres)

A large, family-sized appliance, this is a must-have in any household with busy schedules as it's the perfect way to ensure a healthy, home-cooked meal at the end of a day rushing about. The Kenwood slow cooker, one of the few brands available here in the UAE, is simple and convenient to use, and with its classic metal and black design, will fit in with any kitchen's décor.

**What we liked:** The large capacity cooker is kitted out with a large ceramic bowl, and is roomy enough to easily cook up a hearty stew, soup for the whole family or even roasts like a whole chicken or leg of lamb. The outer shell is powered by electricity, and fitted inside is a ceramic insert which is removable and washable, and can go from kitchen to dining table. Easy to use, with straightforward controls – there are only three settings to choose from: Low, High and Auto – it's just a matter of chucking in your favourite meat and vegetables with herbs and spices, and leaving it to cook away.

Generally cooking on low takes about eight hours, high about four hours, and auto, somewhere in between. It's best to follow recipe instructions and your manual, at least for the first few times, until you get the hang of your cooker. If you are going to set the cooker before leaving home, set it to Auto so that it will turn itself off and on as needed, but if you are cooking something overnight, it can be set on low. Always remember to use cooking spray or a bit of oil before putting the food in to be cooked, as this makes the ceramic bowl easy to clean – otherwise the crusty edges of food can get hard to clean.

One of the best tools for healthy cooking, not only did we end up using less oil and fat for cooking, but also less water for stews, casseroles and the like, as there is no evaporation in the cooking process.

**What we didn't like:** There is no timer, so you can't set it to turn off at a desired time, and have to rely on their existing settings. The other issue, which is for slow cooking in general, and not this particular model, is that it can't be used for frying, so certain recipes will require browning of onions or meat on the stovetop before placing in the slow cooker.

**To buy:** Dhs199, available at Jashanmal.

### User tip

Remember that every time you remove the lid, it adds about half an hour to the cooking time.



Have you used a Slow cooker before? What is your favourite dish to cook in it? Share your recipes and tips with us on [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme)





# Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.

**Q** How do I keep shrimps from curling and shrinking in the pan, when frying?

**A.** Always make sure to de-vein shrimps before cooking. To prevent them from curling and shrinking, all you need to do is rinse them in a pan with 2 tablespoons of sea salt, and then boil in water for 1-2 minutes. I like to lemon juice, white pepper corns, parsley stalks, a little salt, sugar, and a couple of bay leaves to the water to add flavour. After this, you can shell the shrimp and sauté as per your recipe.

**Q** Can you suggest how to cook chestnuts so that they come out whole, peel well and do not get burnt? Also, how do I check if they are cooked and ready to be eaten?

**A.** I love cooking with chestnuts when they are in season. To make removing the shell and skin easier after cooking, make a criss cross with a small paring knife on the dome of the chestnut. If you want to pot-roast them, add a little oil to a heavy bottomed pan then add the chestnuts, stirring continually to prevent them from burning. Once they pop open, remove from the pan and peel. You could also roast on charcoal until they crackle and pop open. Always peel when it's hot; if they cool down, warm up again before peeling. Chestnuts can also be boiled – cover the chestnuts in a pan of cold water approximately 6 cm above the chestnuts. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a medium simmer and cook for 25 minutes. Strain the chestnuts and peel immediately.



**Q** I tried pistachio crusted chicken in a restaurant recently, and would like to recreate it at home. Could you tell me the secret to getting the chopped pistachios to stick to the chicken and not fall off when frying?

**A.** Grind the pistachio nuts to the size of large breadcrumbs, using a food processor. Coat skinless chicken in seasoned flour and then dip in an egg wash made of half egg and half milk. Press the chicken onto the pistachio crumbs. If you want a thicker coating, repeat the egg and pistachio coating.



**Q** Can I make crème fraîche at home? I don't always have the store-bought version at hand when I need it, as they expire quickly!

**A.** Making crème fraîche is a very simple process. In a clean and dry mixing bowl, combine 500ml of double cream with 2 tablespoons of full-fat live yoghurt and mix well. Pour into a sterilised glass jar, cover with a cheesecloth, and set aside at room temperature (approximately 23C). Allow the mix to thicken. This process will take at least 12 hours. Refrigerate the mix and use within seven days.

**Q** I love cooking mussels, but don't know how to eliminate the fishy taste from baked mussels?

**A.** Mussels tend to have a strong flavour. Soak them in lemon juice or milk to soften the taste. When baking, use a Mornay sauce and gratinate with herbed garlic bread crumbs, or cook with plenty of herbs, spices, garlic, chilli or ginger.



**Q** Can you suggest good oily fish substitutes for mackerel that are good for grilling?

**A.** Mackerel is being over-fished so it's great you're looking for alternative options. There are several substitutes available on the market. I prefer using kingfish to make grilled steaks and local tuna to make kebabs – just make sure to have them cleaned completely before cooking.



## Andy's ingredient of the month

**My ingredient of the month is locally grown broccoli. It is high in vitamin C and fibre, good for the immune system, and rich in antioxidants and flavanoids. Slice and eat raw in salads dressed with lime and sweet chilli sauce, steamed, or juiced with beetroot and ginger.**

Got a cooking question you need answered? Write in to us at **feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com**. To find out more about Chef Andy, visit **chefandycampbell.com**.



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## Friday Brunch at Media Rotana!

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### **Prego's**

Italian specialties from pastas to pizzas in a truly Italian ambiance to enhance the experience for **AED 299\***.

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Delicious bangers, pies and much more at the popular English pub for **AED 229\***.

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For more information, contact us at 04-4350201, fb.media@rotana.com

\*Inclusive of standard selected beverages

\*All prices are in AED inclusive of 10% Service Charge & 10% Municipality Fees

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On my bookshelf. . .



★ We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook they can't live without.

**Lloyd Carter, Executive**

**Development Chef, Jumeirah Restaurants**

"The book which I am currently referencing for a Noodle house project is 'e&o cookbook' by Will Ricker. I am a huge fan of his books because the dishes are packed full of flavour, elegantly presented and inspire me to order ingredients and get cooking. Not bad for an author of cookery books who is not actually a chef – he is a restaurateur, but a good one."

Watch this:

★ **Come dine with me, Tuesday-Saturday, various times, on BBC Lifestyle**



The show brings together a group of four amateur chefs who host a dinner party at their homes on consecutive evenings, cooking a three course menu, complemented by a dress code and theme. Each person is given a budget for ingredients, and they are judged by their competitors. The show makes for fun viewing, especially thanks to the sarcastic comments on voiceover!



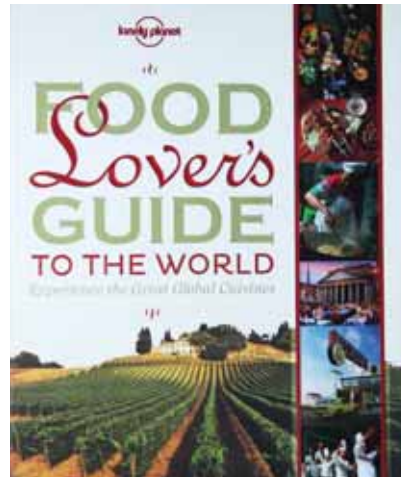
Download this:

★ **Just Desserts by James Martin**

Get this dedicated dessert app from the celebrity chef to inspire you the next time you're baking, or to simply feast your eyes! There are over 40 recipes to choose from, of varying difficulty levels, from marshmallows to croquembouche. You can save your favourites, and convert measurements into your preferred units allowing you to customise it to your convenience.

# Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.



★ **Food lover's guide to the world (Lonely Planet)**

"When we travel, we discover a place through its food" – this line from the book's introduction by Mark Bittman aptly sums up its spirit. From the world's best known travel experts, the hard bound book takes the reader on a delicious journey around the world, with different sections dedicated to different countries. From the world's best known gastronomic destinations such as France, Thailand, India and Italy, to lesser known countries like South Korea, each section delves into the region's cuisine and culture, highlights the must-visit restaurants, and shares recipes to try at home. Towards the back of the book, it also travels to regions with distinctive cuisines – such as British Isles, Latin America and Australia and New Zealand – where it isn't possible to cover each country individually, making for quite a comprehensive read. Accompanied by evocative travel and food photography, this is the book to lose yourself in for hours on a lazy weekend afternoon, or to use as inspiration for planning your next trip! Dhs179, at Jashanmal bookstores

Feeling inspired? Turn to p97 to find out how you can turn these dreamy culinary journeys from the pages of a book into reality, with us!

**Love Lonely Planet? Check out the newly launched Lonely Planet Traveller Middle East magazine, on sale now!**



**Nigellissima (Chatto & Windus)**

Nigella Lawson can make the cover of any book look good, but this one, based on her TV series of the same name, is as

delectable inside as it is on the outside. Her opening introduction tells us, with disarming candour, that this isn't Italian cooking from a Nonna's kitchen, but rather her interpretations of the cuisine. Divided on the basis of ingredients (Pasta; Flesh, fish & fowl; Vegetables; and Sweet things) the recipes are – in typical Nigella style – mostly simple to recreate, a little indulgent and do-able. She has also included a few handy tips on both Italian ingredients and cooking techniques at the beginning, which bit is handy, as well as a bonus Christmas section, which focuses on traditional Italian festive delicacies. Dhs108, at Jashanmal bookstores



**Indian food made easy (Quadrille Publishing Ltd)**

The popular BBC TV personality demystifies Indian cuisine in this classic Indian recipe book. Following a tried and tested formula of dividing recipes up according to

ingredients, the book contains a truly varied mix of recipes, with dishes from the different cuisines of India – from Bengal to Mangalore, and everywhere in between – as well as popular street food items that may not necessarily count as traditional Indian food (chilli cheese toast, anyone?). Anjum also includes contemporary takes on Indian flavours, such as her lamb burgers, although the dessert sections seems like a bit of an afterthought. With a handy guide to traditional ingredients and cooking utensils, simple instructions and explanations, this is a must-have as much for beginners to Indian cooking, as it is for those wanting to experiment with new flavours and modern recipes.

Dhs126, available at Jashanmal bookstores

# Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

## Valentine's Day dining

### \* Bussola, Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina

Begin a five-course set menu package with welcome canapes of oysters and foie gras and a glass of bubbly. The selection of love-themed dishes on offer include heart shape pasta filled with fresh Tuscan sheep's cheese, pears with butter sage and walnuts sauce, and a dark chocolate fondant with pear sauce and rum-marinated strawberry for dessert.

Available on February 14, from Dhs600 per couple, call 04-5117136.

### \* At.mosphere, Burj Khalifa

Splurge this Valentine's day by choosing a unique five-course menu created specifically with a 'him and her' theme, for couples to share. Dishes offered will include obsi blue prawns with lemongrass, mango and soy pearls for her, and black truffle, crustacean vinaigrette and violet flowers for him, for starters; mains including a fish course with lavender and milk-poached turbot for her and a razor clam, radish and piperade version for him, and a duo of delectable desserts will be served to end the night on a sweet note – a truly luxurious gastronomical experience.

Available on February 14, Dhs2,000 per couple, call 04-8883828.



### \* Fire and Ice, Raffles Dubai

Immerse yourself in the tranquil surroundings as you dine at the open terrace that overlooks the Raffles botanical gardens, and treat yourselves to a five-course menu featuring Belon oysters, char-grilled swordfish, Irish grass-fed beef striploin, smoked paprika and rosemary corn fed French chicken, and grilled sea bass with wild tiger prawns. Chocoholics can sate their tastebuds with chocolate soufflé and refreshing cocktails such as the chocolate and fig Manhattan.

Available on February 14, Dhs899 per couple, call 04-3248888.

### \* Center cut steakhouse, Ritz-Carlton DIFC

Tuck into a three-course set menu of romance foods including scallops and lobster, pan seared organic salmon with morel cream and asparagus, chocolate mousse, and a bottle of champagne – all accompanied by classic jazz and blues played at the piano bar, to set a romantic vibe for the evening. Available on February 14 and 15, for Dhs1,800 per couple. Call 04-3722323.



### \* Quest, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

Inspired by some of the most romantic films of all time, the Valentine's Day menu will feature movie-themed dishes such as a foie gras,



honey and rice terrine served in the shape of a book to represent The Notebook; a breakfast cereal dessert accompanied by croissant-flavoured ice cream to represent Breakfast at Tiffany's; and decadent hot chocolate and smoked paprika to represent the ultimate food-meets-romance movie – Chocolat.

Available on February 14, Dhs550 per head for regular seating and from Dhs2,500 per couple for the private room. Call 02-8115666.

### \* Nàis Italian kitchen

If you want a gourmet Italian treat, but haven't got time to cook at home, just order in from Nàis Italian Kitchen in Jumeirah Lake Towers. Offering a four-course menu, created around the flavours and colours of romance, the menu includes dishes such as spicy clam soup with cherry tomatoes, cocoa gnocchi in butter sauce, bake sea bass, and passion fruit Bavarese glazed with white chocolate on strawberry coulis.

Available on February 14, Dhs300 for the set menu, call 04- 4529991.



## Chinese New Year celebrations



### \* Zheng He's, Madinat Jumeirah

Enjoy a set menu of Cantonese dishes such as hand-made spring rolls, crystal prawn dumplings, slow cooked rough noodle with chicken strips, and desserts such as the sticky rice cake with lychee ice-cream.

Available for lunch from February 10 to 24, Dhs188 per head. Call 04-3666730.

### \* Saffron, Atlantis The Palm

Commemorate the year of the snake by watching the spectacular traditional lion dance and trying out Chinese signature dishes such as claypot fried seafood glass noodle with white pepper, stir fried diced lamb, five spice duck meat noodle soup with duck consommé and fortune cookies.

Available from February 9 to 11, for Dhs160 per head for lunch and Dhs235 per head for dinner. Call 04-4262626.



### \* Peppercrab restaurant, Grand Hyatt Dubai

Bring in the Chinese New Year by feasting on Yu Sheng, the raw fish Chinese salad traditionally eaten during this time, and other dishes deemed auspicious by the Chinese such as grilled prawns with pumpkin sauce and shrimp fried rice in bamboo basket.

Available from February 10 to 16, call 04-3172222.



### \* Aspen by Kempinski, Kempinski Mall of the Emirates

Relax and unwind with a cup of Phoenix oolong tea, prepared in the traditional ceremonial way, along with an assortment of dim sums at the unique Chinese afternoon tea ceremony.

Available from February 10 to 20, for Dhs295 per couple. Call 04-4095999. >>

## Celebrate Chinese New Year in style



Bring in the Year of the Snake at Shang Palace, Shangri La Dubai, with a specially created menu from Executive Chinese Chef Kam. The special set menu will feature traditional delicacies, such as Yu Sheng, assorted lobster dim sum, steamed fish, fried golden chicken and a special new year dessert called Nian Gao and will be available from February 9 to 12. If you visit on February 10, you will also be treated to a traditional lion dance in the lobby. Prices start from Dhs 388 per person (excluding beverages), call 04-4052703 or visit facebook.com/ShangDubai.

Take a sneak peek at the menu and let your tastebuds be tempted!

### MENU

#### STARTER

Ye Sung (N)

Sliced raw salmon with assorted pickled julienne vegetables in plum sauce

#### DIM SUM

Steamed lobster dumplings

Steamed fish dumplings

#### SOUP

Steamed dried scallops with assorted mushrooms

#### MAIN COURSE

Roasted chicken with golden garlic and dried chili

Steamed hamour with ginger, spring onion and soy sauce

Wok-fried prawn in Singaporean sauce with asparagus and shimeji mushroom

Stir-fried kai lan and choy sum with shiitake mushroom and oyster sauce (V)

Scallop fried rice with egg and asparagus

#### DESSERT

'Nian Gao' Chinese glutinous rice cake (V)

'Tang Yuan' Deep-fried red bean glutinous rice ball (V)



# Flavours of the month

This month's top restaurant promotions.



The Wharf, Mina A'Salam,  
Madinat Jumeirah

## \* Flavours from the sea

Treat yourself to a gourmet seafood lunch at The Wharf, Mina A'Salam, Madinat Jumeirah, where you can try out an assortment of fresh seafood including prawns, scallops, mussels, oysters and lobster, all cooked in a traditional English pub-style. Available for lunch from Saturday to Thursday, call 04-3666730.

## \* Meaty meal

The Meat feast promotion at Dunes cafe, Shangri-La Hotel, Dubai, is fit for a king, serving up a market-style buffet of different meat cuts from U.S, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, such as tenderloin, strip loin, rib eye, ribs, T-bone, lamb chops and lamb leg. Eat them cooked to your preferred doneness with an assortment of salts including Himalayan rock salt, lava salt and home-made spicy salt. Available on Wednesday from Dhs235 per head. Call 04-4052703.

## \* Luxe indulgence

We will be hot-footing to Sayad, Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, to tuck into platters of oysters served raw on ice, with shallot vinegar and toasted country bread, served as part of their Feast of oysters promotion taking place this month. Available daily for dinner, from Dhs25 per piece and Dhs160 for platters. Call 02-6909000.

## \* Perfect pairings

Head down with your colleagues on a Thursday evening to Café M at Media One, to sample a selection of wines with cheese fondues, hot fried cheese and individual creamy cheese soufflés. Available from Tuesday to Thursday for Dhs164 per head. Call 04-4271000.

## \* Time for Thai

Specialty Thai restaurant Mango Tree has introduced a new menu which features traditional cuisine with a twist – such as Poo Nim Phad Grapow, a crispy, soft shell crab stir-fried with garlic, fresh hot basil and red chilli; and Massaman short ribs. Delish! Available daily. Call 04-4267313. 



## \* Café brunch

Forget decadent bubbly brunches – if all you want is a relaxed Friday morning, try out the family-friendly brunch buffet at Black Iris café, Uptown Mirdiff which offers salads, paninis, soups, and live cooking stations for breakfast items such as eggs and lunch options such as pastas, at affordable prices. For those looking to curb their sweet tooth craving, try out the freshly baked waffles, pancakes and desserts. Kids can decorate cupcakes and get their faces painted while grown-ups relax at this community café.

Available on Friday, from Dhs75 per adult and Dhs35 per child. Call 04-2559749.

## \* Carnival mania

Experience the glitz and excitement of Rio's annual carnival by dining at Pachanga, Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Resort. Watch colourful samba and capoeira dance shows, while tucking into Brazilian delicacies like churrasco, fish croquet and chicken pie.

Available from February 7 to 9, call 04-3182530.





# Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

## Date-night dining



**Where:** 101 at One & Only The Palm Jumeirah

**What's it like:** Located on a jetty over the gently lapping waters of the Gulf, this glamorous restaurant will take your breath away with its flaming torches and chic, marine-inspired décor. The best way to get here is by the boat that ferries between sister hotel the One & Only Royal Mirage and the jetty (but be warned, the frequency of the boat changes after a certain point in the evening – so double check the timings, and plan your meal accordingly). With floor-to-ceiling glass windows, the indoor melds with the outdoor seamlessly, while the city lights twinkle in the distance.

You can choose between sitting down to a proper meal, or tapas and drinks in the outdoor lounge – probably a better option as the food menu is quite limited. We chose to start with a Cod fish salad with rocket, celery and fennel, and Sauteed baby spinach with chicken chorizo, pine nuts and manchego cheese. Both were light and fresh, with an interesting interplay of flavours. For mains, my partner opted for a Josper grilled baby chicken with grilled potatoes – it was tender and flavourful but the sides felt like they were wanting in quantity and variety. I opted for a seafood paella, which, while generously portioned and pleasant, lacked authentic fragrances, and didn't taste as fresh as I'd have liked. Desserts more than made up for these shortcomings however, as my choice of Berries – a concoction of meringue, whipped cream, strawberry sorbet and fresh berries was light and absolutely delicious. My partner's frozen ice cream choice – sort of a gourmet version of a Choco bar with vanilla ice cream encased in hardened chocolate was also polished off

**Best for:**  
Making a  
great first  
impression

with ease. The average and slightly over-priced food doesn't live up to the spectacular setting, but it still makes for a very special evening.

**If you want to go:** Around Dhs550 for two, without drinks. Call 04-4401030.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



**Where:** Bateaux Dubai

**What it's like:** Dinner cruises seem to get a bit of a bad rap when it comes to food, where you typically end up paying for the experience rather than the culinary offerings. This is a rare exception. The only glass-windowed cruise boat on the Dubai creek, with contemporary wood and glass interiors, Bateaux Dubai gently floats up and down the waterway, with a talented duo performing live chamber music – all very civilised. The menu is surprisingly varied – considering the limitations of a mobile kitchen – and all the food is prepared fresh. After being welcomed with a fresh strawberry mocktail, a canapé platter and a mouthwatering mushroom soup, we settled down to order – I opted for a duck confit salad to start, while my partner chose a wild mushroom-filled deboned quail. Both dishes were beautifully presented and had exceptional flavours. For mains, I chose a baked seabass in a creamy, mushroom sauce with asparagus and gratinated mussels, which was delicious. But I ended up with some serious food envy with the homemade basil and potato gnocchi with slow braised shredded beef and smoked bone marrow jus on the other side of the table. With such generous portions, we barely had any room left for dessert, but couldn't refuse the very more-ish hazelnut coated profiteroles with cognac and date ice cream on offer. I opted for a classic – chocolate fondant, accompanied by a roasted almond ice cream. Warm The warm pudding, with melting chocolate oozing out, set off perfectly by the ice cream, was one of the best versions of the chocolatey treat I have ever tried. As you wind down with tea and petit four chocolates, the boat eases its way back promptly at 11pm. While it may be seen as a touristy

**Best for:**  
Celebrating  
with that special  
someone

must-do, with the quality of food on offer, it is also a great option for a special-occasion meal.

**If you want to go:** From Dhs350 per head (with soft drinks), call 04- 8145553.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

# Gifts of Love

Not sure what to get the foodie in your life this Valentine's Day? We've got you covered with our handy present ideas for him and her.



**KITCHEN AID COBALT BLUE STAND MIXER**, Dhs2,599 at Al Ghandi electronics



**MY LIFE AND MY LOVE CALLIGRAPHY TURKISH COFFEE CUPS**, Dhs160 each at O de Rose boutique



**CREMESSO COFFEE MACHINE**, Dhs1,300 at Bloomingdale's Home



**KEEP CALM MUG**, Dhs59 at The One



**BEECH CHOPPING BLOCK**, Dhs95 at Lakeland



**NICAN LENS CUP**, Dhs109 at Virgin Megastore



**BUGATTI TOASTER**, Dhs1,075 at Jashanmal stores



**BREAKFAST IN BED SET**, Dhs79 at Virgin Megastore



**MUSIC AND MENUS SMOOTH COOKING SET**, Dhs90 at Bloomingdale's Home



**COCKTAIL SHAKER SET**, Dhs198 at Harvest Home



**GORDON RAMSAY'S ULTIMATE COOKERY COURSE BOOK** (Hodder & Stoughton), Dhs158 at Virgin Megastore



**PICNIC COOLER**, Dhs645 at Harvest Home



**WEBER ORIGINAL KETTLE ROTISSERIE**, Dhs801 at Ace Hardware





**DECO PINK DINNER SET,**  
from Dhs13 per pc  
at 2XL Furniture.



**FONDUE POT,**  
Dhs39 at Home Centre

**KITCHENAID 5-SPEED BLENDER,**  
Dhs850 at  
Galleries  
Lafayette Dubai



**VERO SWEETS HANDBAG BOX  
FILLED WITH CHOCOLATES,**  
Dhs25 at Candelite

**COOKIES, CUPCAKES  
AND CAKE POPS,** from  
Dhs18 onwards at Hey  
sugar bakeshop

**WAHA MEXICAN  
FOOD AT HOME  
BY THOMAS  
MIERS,** Dhs126 at  
Virgin Megastore



**CHOCMOD  
TRUFFETTES  
TOFFEE PIECES,**  
Dhs25 at Candelite



**VINTAGE STYLE JUICER,**  
Dhs89 at Home Centre



**SHORTSTACKS SWEETHEART  
BREAKFAST COLLECTION  
GIFT BOX,** Dhs165 at  
southernculturefoods.com



**DIPTYQUE ROSE  
DUET CANDLE,**  
Dhs275 at Harvey  
Nichols Dubai



**THE ONE JUNIOR LES DESSERTS  
CAKE STAND,** Dhs99 at The One

**BONBONNIÈRE ORIENTAL GOLDEN SEAL  
TWO DOOR BOX WITH AN  
ASSORTMENT OF 99 HAND-  
CRAFTED PRALINES AND  
TRUFFLES,** Dhs1,300 at Sprüngli



**LE CREUSET  
STONEWARE  
BERRY POT,**  
Dhs155 at Lakeland



**COOKIES GALORE  
BY JACQUELINE  
BELLEFONTAINE**  
(Spruce), Dhs50 at  
Virgin Megastore





# Enjoy a World of Taste this Valentine's day

Sample the variety of popular restaurant brands from the Saleh Bin Lahej Group-Hospitality Division where you can always expect great food, reasonable prices, friendly ambience and excellent service.



## VALENTINE OFFERS



### TREAT YOURSELF A 3-COURSE ITALIAN MENU FOR TWO AT ROMANO'S MACARONI GRILL

Take a romantic detour to Italy with Romano's Macaroni Grill. Enjoy a 3-course Valentine Menu by combining two of your favorite Tapas and Entrees, complemented with a dessert to share from its decadent menu choices, all for only Dhs250 (inclusive of soft drinks). Offer available from February 7-15. Located at Dubai Festival City (04 2326001), The Dubai Mall (04 3308089).



### SHARE THE LOVE AT CANTINA LAREDO

Relish in a 3-course Valentine Menu for Two at Cantina Laredo, a restaurant which evokes the sophisticated and gourmet taste of Mexico. From the appetising Top Shelf Guacamole, to the mouth-watering Combo Fajita and Fish 'n Shrimp and the timeless favorite Mexican Apple Pie, you can enjoy an array of authentic delicacies for just Dhs195, inclusive of refillable beverages.

Offer available from February 9-14. Located at Khalidiyah Mall, Abu Dhabi (02-6354877).



### CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY À LA EL CHICO

Indulge in a 3-course Valentine Menu for Two at El Chico at The Walk, JBR. Start your meal with a choice of your favorite Top Shelf Guacamole or Pizzadilla, and share the delicious Shrimp Fajita and Grilled Beef and Mushroom then end with the sweet Brownie Skillet Sundae, for just Dhs195 (inclusive of refillable beverages).

Offer available from February 9-14. Located at The Walk, Jumeirah Beach Residence (04-4233828).



### ENJOY CREAMYLICIOUS-NESS AT THE PIZZA COMPANY

Share a fun pizza experience this Valentine's Day with 'Creamylicious'! Bask in the Italian classic recipe of Chicken Fettuccine in Alfredo sauce with char grilled chicken, or check out the unique new Pollo Spinachi in which chicken is combined with fresh spinach on a creamy and cheesy bed of Alfredo sauce with mozzarella cheese.

Located in Al Diyafa (04 3454848), Al Rigga Road (04 2299391), The Walk - JBR (04 4231996), In front of Lamcy Plaza (04 3709895), Khalidiyah Mall, Abu Dhabi (02 6354899).

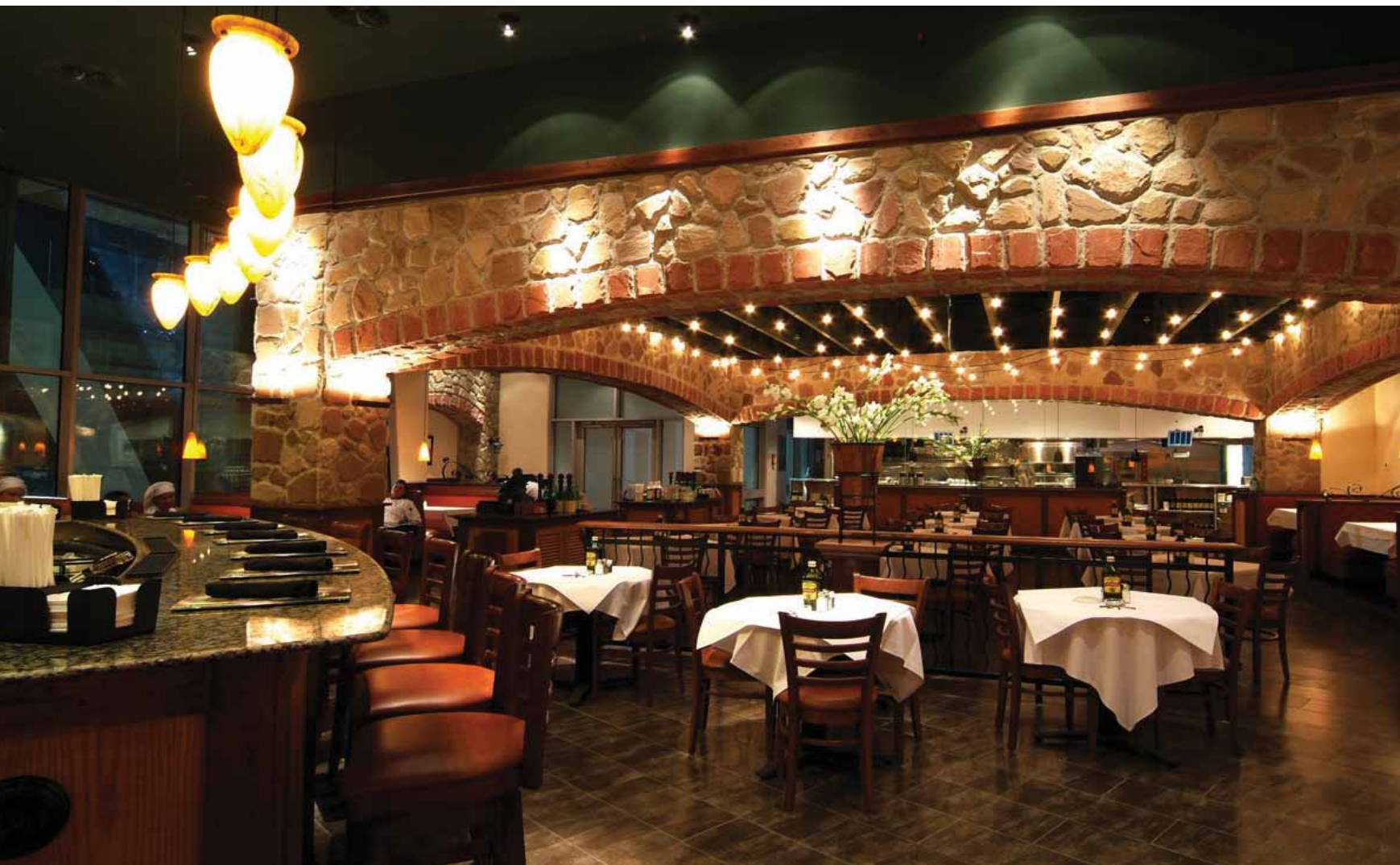




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The Dubai Mall 04 330 8089

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# Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

## IN THIS SECTION



\* Five fab ideas for quick weeknight suppers, P26



\* Healthy recipes for everyday eating, P30



\* Chinese made easy, P36

Hazelnut meringues with hazelnut praline & chocolate sauce, recipe p65





# Ready in 30

Speedy yet stylish suppers for Sunday to Thursday.

Recipes KATE CALDER Photographs DAVID MUNNS



## Spaghetti pomodoro with chilli prawns

SERVES 2 • COOK 25 MINUTES • Easy

200g large raw prawns  
½-1 tsp chilli flakes  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
Olive oil  
1 onion, chopped  
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes  
½ tsp golden caster sugar  
150g spaghetti  
A large handful of basil, torn

**1** Marinate the prawns in the chillies mixed with half the garlic and 1 tbsp olive oil.  
**2** Cook the onion and rest of the garlic in 1 tbsp oil in a wide, pan until soft. Add the tomatoes and sugar. Simmer for 15 mins.  
**3** Cook the pasta following the pack instructions. Drain, keeping 2 tbsp of the pasta water.  
**4** Add the prawns and marinade to the tomato sauce and cook for 2 mins or until the prawns turn pink. Add the pasta and water to the sauce with a large handful of basil. Toss, season and serve.  
PER SERVING 497 kcs, protein 30g, carbs 64g, fat 13.5g, sat fat 1.8g, fibre 6.2g, salt 0.7g



## Chicken and cashew curry with coconut lime noodles

SERVES 4 • COOK 30 MINUTES • Easy

4 chicken breasts, cut into chunks  
1 tbsp sunflower oil  
1 large onion, halved and sliced  
6cm ginger chunk, grated  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 tbsp garam masala  
100g cashews, toasted and roughly chopped  
1 x 400ml coconut milk tin  
200g rice noodles  
1 tbsp fish sauce  
1 tbsp palm or golden caster sugar  
2 limes, 1 zested and juiced, 1 cut into wedges

**1** Brown the chicken in a pan with a little oil then remove. Add the onion, ginger and garlic and cook until soft. Add the garam masala and cashews and cook for 2 more minutes. Return the chicken to the pan and add ½ the coconut milk and 2 tbsp of water. Bring up to a simmer and cook for 10 mins.  
**2** Meanwhile, cook the rice noodles following pack instructions and then drain and rinse under cold water. In a small pan heat the remaining coconut milk, the fish sauce, sugar, zest and lime juice. Stir until the sugar has melted. Add the noodles and heat through.  
**3** Serve the curry cashew chicken with the noodles and wedges of lime to squeeze over.  
PER SERVING 721 kcs, protein 39.8g, carbs 57.4g, fat 34.9g, sat fat 18.2g, fibre 3.2g, salt 1g



**Veggie chopped cobb salad**

SERVES 2 • COOK 20 MINUTES •

Easy 

2-3 thick slices ciabatta, cut into cubes

Olive oil

1 clove garlic, halved

2 tsp white wine vinegar

3 tbsp soured cream

80g blue cheese, crumbled

2 little Gem lettuce, quartered

1 large ripe avocado, cubed

2 handfuls cherry tomatoes, halved

A handful of chives, snipped

**1** Heat the grill to high. Put the ciabatta cubes on a baking sheet and drizzle with oil. Grill on both sides until golden and then lightly rub with the garlic.

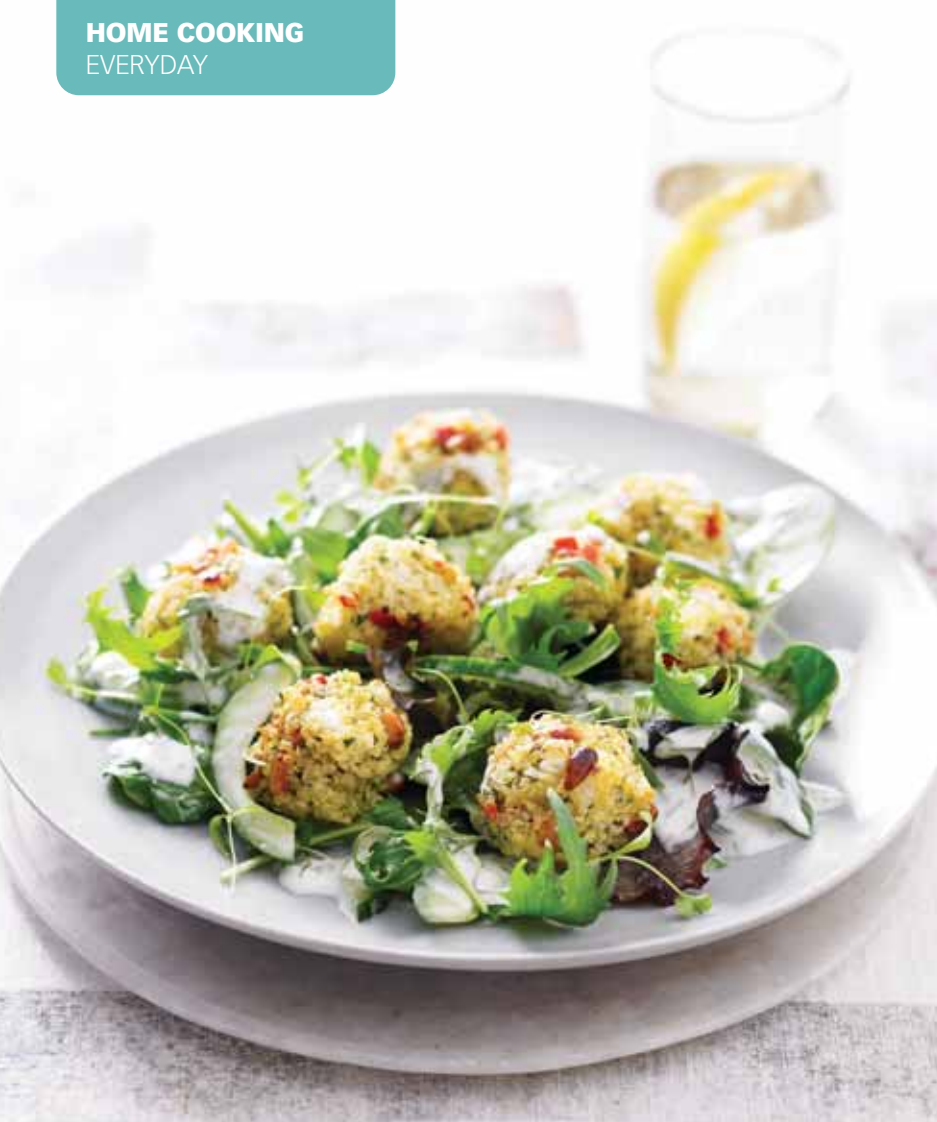
**2** To make the dressing, whisk the white wine vinegar with the soured cream and then stir in the cheese.

**3** Arrange the lettuce, avocado, tomatoes and croutons on plates. Spoon over the blue cheese dressing, sprinkle with chives and serve.

PER SERVING 474 kcals, protein 16.2g, carbs 22.3g, fat 35.4g, sat fat 15.1g, fibre 5.6g, salt 1.4g >>







## Feta and pepper quinoa balls with lemon and dill aioli

SERVES 4 • COOK 30 MINUTES • **Easy**

- 120g quinoa
- Olive oil
- 1 small red pepper, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp pine nuts
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 dill handfuls, chopped
- 1 handful mint, chopped
- 100g feta, crumbled
- 1 egg
- 4 tbsp light mayonnaise
- 1 cucumber, halved, seeds scooped out and then sliced
- 4 large handfuls salad leaves

- 1 Heat the oven to 220C/ 200C fan. Cook the quinoa following pack instructions then drain well.
- 2 Heat a little oil in a pan and add the pepper and pine nuts. Cook until the pepper has softened and the nuts are

lightly golden.

3 In a bowl, mix the quinoa with the zest, 1 handful of dill, the mint, the pepper and nuts, the feta and egg. Season.

4 Line a baking sheet with baking parchment. Using your hands, carefully shape into balls the size of a walnut (you'll make about 30). Put on the baking sheet and bake for 15 mins or until the tops are golden and they have firmed up.

5 To make the dressing, whisk the lemon juice with the mayonnaise and the other handful of dill and then season. Toss half the dressing with the cucumber.

6 To serve, divide the salad and cucumber between 4 plates. Add the quinoa balls (be gentle as they are quite delicate) and drizzle over the remaining lemon and dill aioli.

PER SERVING 302 kcals, protein 12.2g, carbs 21.4g, fat 18.4g, sat fat 5.1g, fibre 2g, salt 1.4g

## Smoked trout and asparagus Niçoise

SERVES 4 • COOK 20 MINUTES • **Easy**

- 500g baby new potatoes, halved
- 125g asparagus tips
- 12 quail's eggs
- 5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 fillets smoked trout, roughly broken into large pieces
- 2 handfuls black olives



1 Boil the potatoes for 10 minutes, or until tender, adding the asparagus for the final 4 mins and then drain. Boil the eggs for 2 mins, drain and then rinse under cold water until cool enough to handle. Peel and halve the eggs.

2 To make the dressing, whisk the oil with the vinegar, mustard, garlic and season.

3 Divide the eggs, asparagus, potatoes, trout and olives between 4 plates or arrange on a platter. Drizzle over the dressing and serve.

PER SERVING 393 kcals, protein 20.2g, carbs 21.9g, fat 24.6g, sat fat 4.4g, fibre 4.2g, salt 1.9g







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WHERE *life* HAPPENS

# A week of healthy suppers

Exciting  
new recipes  
to help you  
eat well

Five simple, seasonal meals to keep you on track this winter. Recipes JENNIFER JOYCE Photographs DAVID MUNNS

## Wholewheat pasta with broccoli & almonds

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 15

MINS **Easy** **V** **Good for you** **Folate** **Fibre**

**Vit C** 1 of 5-a-day

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced (add extra chilli if you like it hot)  
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
250g wholewheat spaghetti  
300g thin-stemmed broccoli, cut into pieces  
1 lemon zest  
25g flaked toasted almonds  
Parmesan shavings (or vegetarian alternative), to serve

**1** Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the chilli and garlic, and cook on a low heat until golden. Remove from the heat.

**2** Add the pasta to the water and cook following pack instructions. In the final

4 mins of cooking, add the broccoli.

Once cooked, drain and tip into the garlic pan. Add the lemon zest and almonds, and toss together well. Serve in bowls, topped with Parmesan shavings.

PER SERVING 638 kcals, protein 26g, carbs 82g, fat 23g, sat fat 3g, fibre 16g, sugar 6g, salt none



Quick veggie  
pasta for two





## Bulghar wheat, date & clementine salad

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS •

NO COOK **Easy** **V** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**

**Vit C** **Iron** **3 of 5-a-day**

140g bulghar wheat  
1 tsp each ground allspice and ground cumin  
6 stoned dates, chopped  
Small handful parsley, chopped  
400g can chickpeas, drained  
2 tbsp flaked toasted almonds  
100g bag baby spinach  
2 clementines, peel removed, sliced  
**FOR THE DRESSING**  
Juice 1 lemon  
2 tbsp Sherry vinegar  
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

**1** Put the bulghar wheat and spices in a large bowl, season with salt and pour over 140ml boiling water. Cover with cling film and leave to sit for 10 mins. Fluff with a fork, then add the chopped dates, parsley, chickpeas and most of the almonds.  
**2** Pour the dressing ingredients into a glass jar with a fitted lid, add seasoning. Shake well and pour over the salad.  
**3** Just before eating, mix the spinach through, top with the clementine slices and scatter with the remaining almonds.  
PER SERVING 765 kcals, protein 19g, carbs 114g, fat 23g, sat fat 3g, fibre 10g, sugar 42g, salt 1.1g

Japanese twist on a favourite treat



## Miso chili steak with crispy sweet potatoes

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **Fibre** **Vit C** **Iron** **1 of 5-a-day**

2 large sweet potatoes, cut into wedges  
1 tbsp vegetable oil, plus a little extra  
1 tbsp sesame seeds  
1 tbsp miso paste  
Juice of 1 lemon  
1 tbsp hot chilli sauce (sriracha is nice)  
1 tbsp mirin  
2 bavette or other lean steaks (about 200g each)  
Large handful watercress leaves, to serve

**1** Heat oven to 200C. Put the potato wedges on a baking tray and rub with the oil. Sprinkle the sesame seeds and some seasoning over. Bake for 25 mins or until crisp at the edges.

**2** In a small bowl, mix together the miso, lemon juice, chilli sauce and mirin. Rub the steaks with a tiny bit of oil and some seasoning. Spoon 1 tbsp of the sauce over each steak and rub into both sides.  
**3** Heat a griddle pan until really hot, cook the steaks for 2 mins each side, or longer if you prefer it well done. Brush more of the sauce over after you turn them. Transfer to a plate, cover loosely with foil, and leave to rest for 5 mins. Serve the steaks sliced, with extra sauce, the potatoes and watercress.  
PER SERVING 582 kcals, protein 47g, carbs 47g, fat 23g, sat fat 7g, fibre 8g, sugar 16g, salt 1.1g >>



Satisfying one-pot

### Prawn & tomato stew with gremolata topping

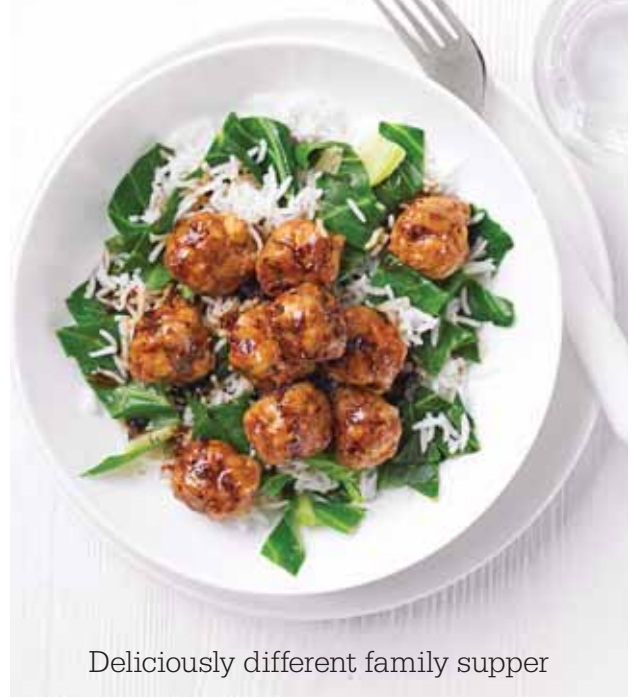
SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ●  
COOK 35 MINS **Easy** **Low fat** **Low cal**  
**Good for you** **Vit C** **1 of 5-a-day**

500g new potatoes  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 large onion, sliced  
4 celery sticks, cut into pieces  
2 garlic cloves, chopped  
2 anchovy fillets, chopped  
Pinch chilli flakes  
400g can chopped tomatoes  
250ml white wine  
200ml vegetable stock  
400g raw king prawns, peeled  
Zest and juice 1 lemon  
1 tsp salted baby capers, rinsed  
Large handful parsley, chopped  
Toasted bread, to serve

**1** Put the potatoes in a saucepan of cold salted water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 15-20 mins or until cooked but still firm. Drain and, when cool enough to handle, thickly slice.

**2** Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large saucepan over a low-medium heat. Add the onion, celery, garlic, anchovy and chilli, season and cook for 8 mins or until softened. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the tomatoes, wine and stock, and cook for 15 mins. Add the prawns, lemon juice, capers and potatoes. Cook for 5 mins more, or until the prawns turn pink and are just cooked. Mix together the parsley and lemon zest, then scatter over the stew, then serve with toasted bread, for dunking.

PER SERVING 308 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 29g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 5g, sugar 10g, salt 1.0g



Deliciously different family supper

### Teriyaki chicken meatballs with rice & greens

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS **Easy** **Low fat** **Low cal** **Vit C** **1 of 5-a-day**

2 shallots  
1 carrot, cut into chunks  
500g boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into chunks  
Zest and juice 1 lemon  
A little oil  
200g basmati rice  
200g spring greens, chopped  
100ml mirin  
3 tbsp soy sauce  
3 tbsp caster sugar

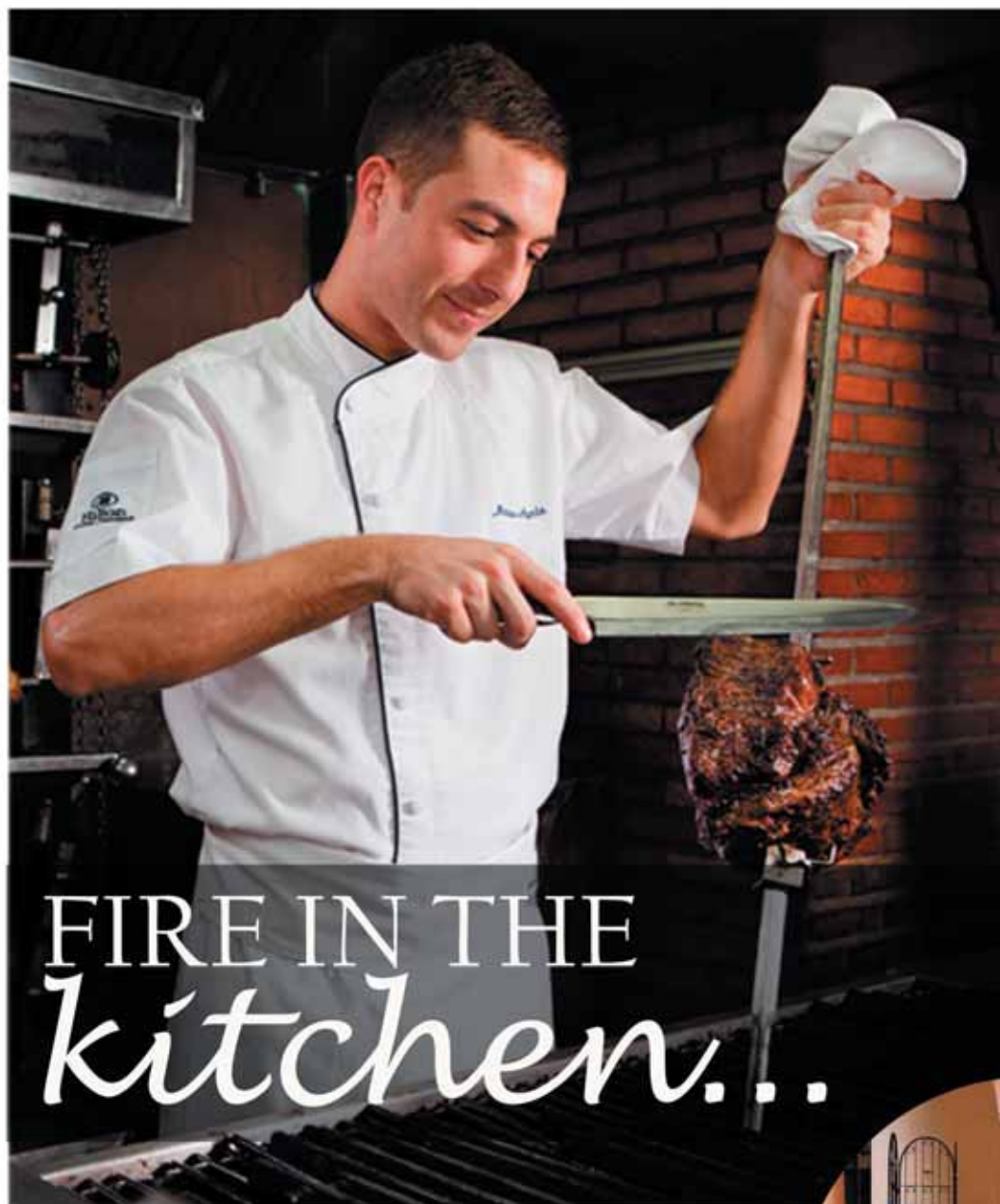
**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Pulse the shallots and carrot in a food processor until finely chopped. Add the chicken, lemon zest and some seasoning, and pulse again until mixed. Using oiled hands, shape into small meatballs. Put on a baking tray lined with baking parchment and bake for 10 mins until browned and cooked through.

**2** Meanwhile, boil the rice following pack instructions, adding the spring greens for the final 4 mins. Drain well.

**3** Add the mirin, soy, lemon juice and sugar to a saucepan. Bring to the boil, then simmer until saucy. Remove from the heat, add the meatballs to the pan and roll them around in the sauce. Divide the rice and greens between plates or bowls and spoon the meatballs over.

PER SERVING 481 kcals, protein 36g, carbs 70g, fat 2g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 28g, salt 2.3g





# FIRE IN THE kitchen...

## Pachanga keeps it hot

With a fresh and innovative menu and nightly entertainment Pachanga has a lot to offer on and off the plate. Located at the Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Resort this restaurant overlooks the tranquil Arabian Sea and will have you feeling like you're on holiday, if only for a night.

And what would a trip to South America be without the seasoning of Latin passions? Cuban Salsa, Argentinean Tango & Brazilian Capoeira are served up every week on Pachanga's dance floor. Like on the streets of Rio, rhythm and dance will sweep you off your feet as passionate performers mingle with restaurant guests in a never ending fiesta.

### THEME NIGHTS

#### Sunday Nights

Salsa show with special menu  
Dhs 115 per person

#### Tuesday Nights

Brazilian Churrasco  
Dhs 195 per person

#### Wednesday Nights

Tango dance show  
Free Lessons

#### Friday Nights

Capoeira show with special menu  
Dhs 210 per person



**Dubai is over 7,000 miles from Rio de Janeiro** but the flavours of Brazil can still be found in the heart of J.B.R.

With luscious skewers of rosemary infused beef, pepper marinated sirloin and chicken immersed in pineapple and garlic roasted over an open fire, Pachanga's Churrasco is hard to resist. It is one of the most popular menu items at Pachanga and has an evening dedicated solely to it. Every Tuesday you can enjoy endless skewers accompanied by flavour filled salads, starters and desserts for a set price of Dhs 195. It is a must for meat lovers!

Other menu favourites include Chef Matias Ayala's traditional selection of empanadas with a variety of cheeses, meat and veggies, the impressive Peruvian king crab salad or seared Patagonian toothfish with braised beans and vegetables. Is your mouth watering yet?

If you have any room to spare for dessert the Dos Amigos (Two Friends) is not to be missed. Marrying chocolate mousse, a delicate biscuit base, dulce de leche and ice cream this is the perfect end to your South American experience.



## ... FIRE ON THE dance floor

### Argentinian Wine Dinner

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, Pachanga will host a fantastic wine dinner, where you can find a variety of Argentinian wines paired with a unique menu. Price per person is Dhs 399. For more information or booking please contact us.

*Pachanga*

Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Resort  
Tel: 971-4 318 2530  
pachanga.jumeirah@hilton.com



# 5 ways to fill a pancake

Delicious sweet and savoury ideas that are super-simple AS Well. Recipes CASSIE BEST  
Photograph WILL HEAP

## Creamy garlic & thyme mushrooms

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS


Easy  

Heat **1 tbsp olive oil** and **1 tbsp butter** in a large frying pan. Add **3 finely sliced garlic cloves** and cook until golden. Tip in **250g pack sliced, mixed mushrooms**, **2 tsp thyme leaves** and seasoning, and cook for 5 mins.

Add **100g cream cheese** and stir until smooth. Divide the mix between 2 warm savoury pancakes, roll or fold up, and serve with a green salad, if you like.

PER SERVING 630kcal, protein 11g, carbs 26g, fat 53g, sat fat 25g, fibre 3g, sugar 4g, salt 1.2g

## Honeycomb butter

SERVES 2 ● PREP 5 MINS PLUS CHILLING ● NO COOK 

In a bowl, bash a **40g honeycomb chocolate bar** (such as a Crunchie) with the end of a rolling pin into chunky crumbs. Add **50g soft butter**, **1 tbsp honey** and a pinch salt, then tip mixture onto a sheet of cling film and roll into a sausage shape. Twist the ends to tighten, then chill for 30 mins. Top 2 warm sweet pancakes with a slice of Honeycomb butter and an extra drizzle of honey.

PER SERVING 645kcal, protein 8g, carbs 58g, fat 42g, sat fat 23g, fibre 1g, sugar 38g, salt 1.7g

## Lemon curd mascarpone

SERVES 2 ● PREP 5 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy 

Put **100g mascarpone**, **zest of ½ lemon**, **1 tbsp lemon juice** and **2 tsp icing sugar** in a bowl and mix to combine. Swirl through **2 tbsp lemon curd**, then set aside. Spoon the creamy lemony mix over 2 warm sweet pancakes and roll or fold up.

PER SERVING 517kcal, protein 12g, carbs 51g, fat 29g, sat fat 15g, fibre 1g, sugar 29g, salt 0.2g

## Ham, spinach & Gruyère

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 5 MINS

Easy  

Empty a **250g bag spinach** into a colander. Pour over a kettleful of boiling water and allow to stand for a few mins to wilt and cool.

Squeeze out excess water, then roughly chop.


Put 4 savoury pancakes on a board. Divide **4 large slices ham**, **200g grated Gruyère** and the spinach between them, then fold each pancake in half. Fry the pancakes in a non-stick frying pan for 2 mins on each side or until golden and crispy with a melting middle.

PER SERVING 524kcal, protein 26g, carbs 26g, fat 40g, sat fat 16g, fibre 2g, sugar 5g, salt 2.5g

## Choc chip, peanut butter & banana

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● NO COOK 

Mix **6 tbsp smooth peanut butter** with **2 tbsp icing sugar**, **2 tbsp milk** and **50g chocolate chips**. Spread the choc-chip mix over 4 warm sweet pancakes. Top with **½ sliced banana**. Fold up and sprinkle with a few **chopped peanuts**, if you like.

PER SERVING 621kcal, protein 14g, carbs 64g, fat 34g, sat fat 13g, fibre 3g, sugar 44g, salt 0.4g 



Choc chip, peanut butter & banana

Food styling VAL BARRETT | Styling SUE ROWLANDS



# Make one, freeze one

Cook a batch of this delicious family favourite and you'll always have a satisfying meal to hand. Recipe BARNEY DESMAZERY Photograph LIS PARSONS

## One-pot chicken & bacon stew

SERVES 8 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 1½ HRS

Easy 

3 tbsp olive oil  
16 chicken pieces on the bone  
(about 3kg in total)  
140g smoked bacon, chopped, or  
cubetti di pancetta  
4 medium carrots, thickly sliced  
2 onions, roughly chopped  
2 tbsp plain flour  
1 tbsp tomato purée  
75ml white wine or cider vinegar  
1 litre chicken stock  
2 bay leaves  
4 tbsp double cream or crème fraîche  
600g small new potatoes, halved  
12 large white mushrooms, quartered  
Herbs, such as parsley, tarragon  
or chives, chopped

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole with a lid. Fry the chicken pieces in batches for 5 mins on each side until well browned, then transfer to a plate. Sizzle the bacon in the casserole for a few mins until beginning to crisp. Stir in the carrots and onions, then cook for 5 mins until starting to soften. Stir in the flour and tomato purée and cook for 1 min more. Finally, splash in the vinegar and stir well.  
**2** Pour in the stock and bring to a simmer. Add the bay leaves, cream and seasoning. Slide in the chicken pieces and scatter over the potatoes, turning everything over a few times so that

the potatoes are immersed in the sauce. Put the lid on and place in the oven. After 40 mins, remove from the oven and stir in the mushrooms. Cover again and cook in the oven for 10 mins more until the chicken is cooked through and tender but not completely falling off the bone. You can now turn off the heat, and chill and freeze some or all of it (see freezing tips, below). If eating straight away, cook for 10 mins more, then sprinkle over the herbs and serve.

PER SERVING 736 kcals, protein 60g,  
carbs 21g, fat 46g, sat fat 14g, fibre  
4g, sugar 7g, salt 1.74g **GF**



All cooked in  
the same dish

### HOW TO FREEZE

- The stew can be frozen for up to 2 months. Freeze it in different-size portions to best suit your household.
- The best way to freeze the stew is in microwavable plastic storage containers that can be defrosted and heated directly in the microwave. You can also use freezer bags – but it's best to freeze them sitting in a bowl in case of spillages.
- Always label each container with the name of

the dish, the date it was cooked and the amount of servings it contains.

### DEFROSTING

- If in a suitable container, defrost in the microwave, then reheat in the microwave until piping hot.
- Alternatively, defrost in the fridge overnight and reheat in a casserole dish at 160C/140C fan for 30-40 mins until piping hot.

# Simple, satisfying Chinese

This month's Chinese New Year is the perfect excuse to forget takeouts and give making Chinese at home a go. Stock up on just four key storecupboard ingredients and you'll be able to whip up these easy dishes in no time. Recipes JANE HORNBY

Photographs STUART OVENDEN

## Your 4 essential flavourings

### • Light soy sauce

Chinese cooks use light soy sauce for flavour and dark soy sauce for colour. Made from fermented soy beans, wheat and salt, soy sauce has a deep savoury flavour and is fairly high in salt. Choose a low-sodium version if watching your intake (the flavour won't be as intense) or Japanese wheat-free tamari if you follow a wheat-free diet.

### • Chinese rice vinegar

Also called rice wine vinegar, this is made from fermented rice wine. It's a clear vinegar, sweeter and less acidic than regular wine vinegars, and is an integral part of many sauces (such as the hot and tangy kung po, opposite), dips, marinades and dressings. If you can't find it, use cider vinegar instead.

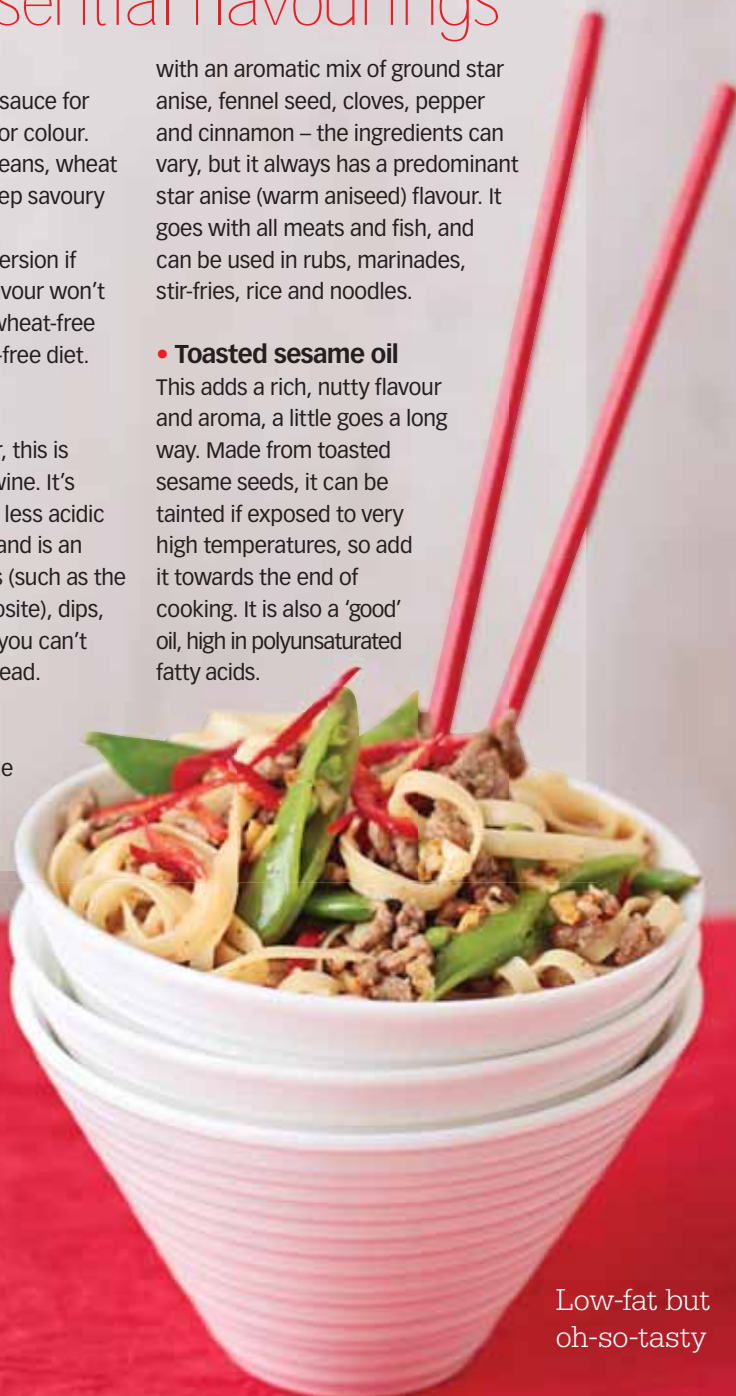
### • Five-spice powder

One of the most recognisable flavours in Chinese cooking, five-spice packs a punch

with an aromatic mix of ground star anise, fennel seed, cloves, pepper and cinnamon – the ingredients can vary, but it always has a predominant star anise (warm aniseed) flavour. It goes with all meats and fish, and can be used in rubs, marinades, stir-fries, rice and noodles.

### • Toasted sesame oil

This adds a rich, nutty flavour and aroma, a little goes a long way. Made from toasted sesame seeds, it can be tainted if exposed to very high temperatures, so add it towards the end of cooking. It is also a 'good' oil, high in polyunsaturated fatty acids.



## Five-spice beef & sugar snap noodles

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS •

COOK 15 MINS **Easy** **Low fat**

250g lean minced beef

3 nests medium egg noodles

Thumb-sized piece ginger, finely grated

3 garlic cloves, finely grated

1 heaped tsp five-spice powder

¼ tsp chilli powder

225g pack mangetout or sugar snap peas

400ml beef stock

3 tbsp light soy sauce, or more to taste  
Sesame oil, to serve

Red chilli, deseeded and shredded to serve (optional)

**1** Heat a large non-stick frying pan or wok, then fry the beef for 10 mins until very well browned. Don't add any oil. Meanwhile, boil the noodles following pack instructions, then drain.

**2** Add the ginger, garlic, five-spice, chilli powder and mangetout to the browned mince, then fry for a few mins more until fragrant and the pods are bright green. Splash in the stock, add the noodles, then season with the soy sauce. Pile into bowls, sprinkling with the sesame oil and red chilli if using.

PER SERVING 458 kcals, protein 30g, carbs 71g, fat 8g, sat fat 8g, fibre 4g, sugar 5g, salt 4.08g

Low-fat but oh-so-tasty

**TIP** Use tongs when serving the noodles, it's easier.



**Kung po prawns**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ●

COOK 10 MINS **Easy** 

- 1 tsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 400g large fresh or frozen raw prawns, butterflied (see Know-how, below)
- 2 tbsp Chinese rice vinegar
- 1 heaped tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
- 85g unsalted, roasted peanuts
- 6 small or 3 large whole dried chillies
- 2 x 225g cans water chestnuts, drained
- Thumb-sized piece ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

**1** Mix the cornflour and 1 tbsp soy sauce, toss in the prawns and set

aside for 10 mins. Stir the vinegar, remaining soy sauce, tomato purée, sugar and 2 tbsp water together to make a sauce.

**2** When you're ready to cook, heat a large frying pan or wok until very hot, then add 1 tbsp oil. Fry the prawns until they are golden in places and have opened out – then tip them out of the pan.

**3** Heat the remaining oil and add the peanuts, chillies and water chestnuts. Stir-fry for 2 mins or until the peanuts start to colour, then add the ginger and garlic and fry for 1 more min. Tip in the prawns and sauce and simmer for 2 mins until thickened slightly. Serve with rice.

PER SERVING 308 kcals, protein 25g, carbs 13g, fat 18g, sat fat 3g, fibre 1g, sugar 6g, salt 2.07g >>

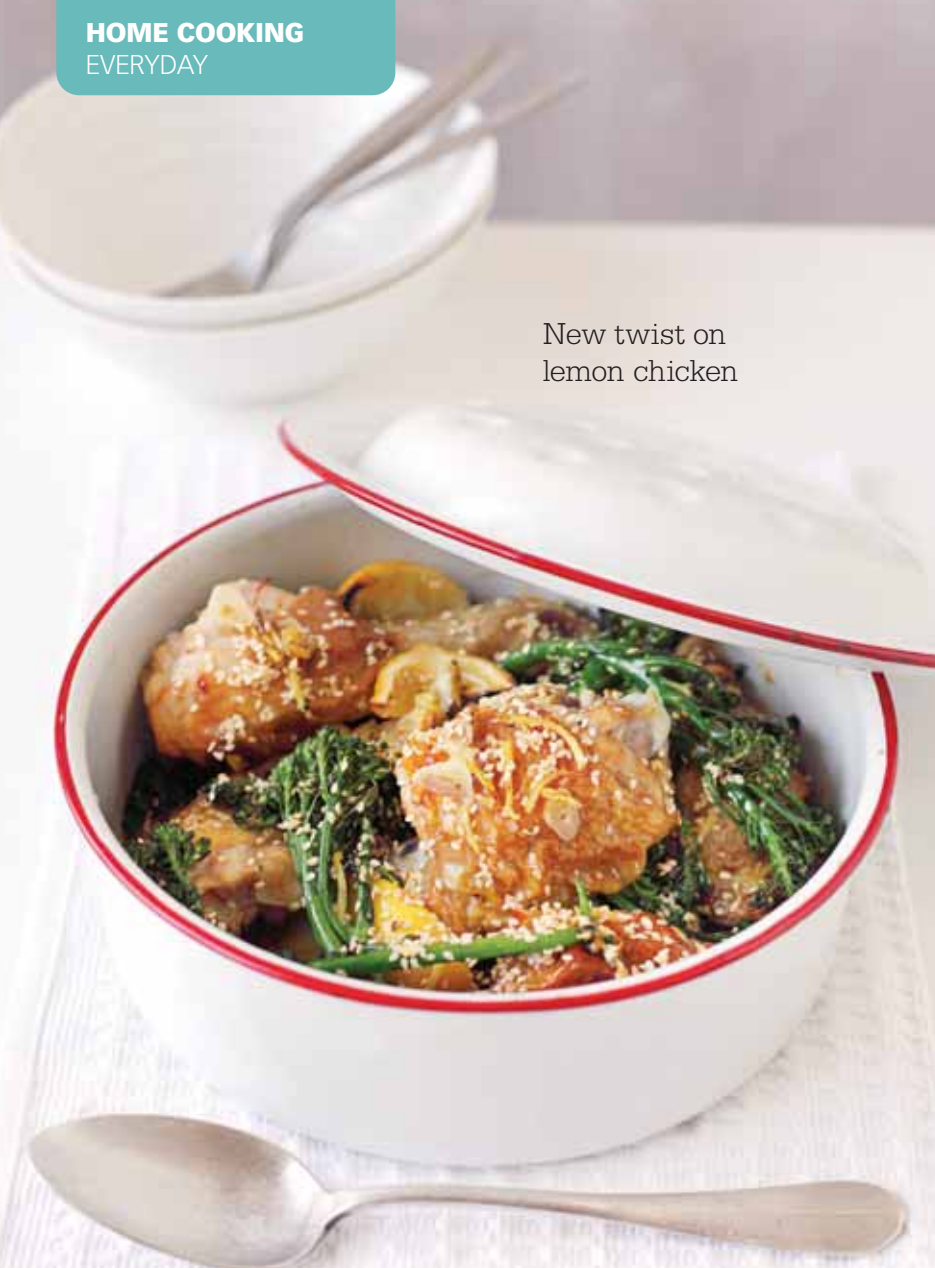
Delicious and quick  
homemade version of  
a takeaway classic

**KNOW-HOW**

To butterfly a prawn, make a cut along the entire length of the prawn, cutting almost all the way through. Pull out the black vein. Butterflying the prawns isn't essential, but it helps them to cook more quickly, trap sauce and look great on your plate.



New twist on  
lemon chicken



### Lemon, broccoli & sesame roast chicken

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS •  
COOK 45 MINS **Easy**

- 4 chicken leg portions, cut into thighs and drumsticks
- 2 lemons, juice of 1, the other cut into 8 chunks
- 200g thin-stemmed broccoli
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- Thumb-sized piece ginger, finely shredded
- 3 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp clear honey
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp sesame oil

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the chicken and lemon chunks in a large

roasting tin, season with pepper, then roast for 30 mins until the chicken is turning golden.

**2** After 25 mins, bring a little water to the boil in a frying pan, add the broccoli, cover and steam for 3 mins until bright green and almost tender, then drain.

**3** Tuck the broccoli around the chicken, scatter the garlic and ginger over and around the meat, then splash over the lemon juice, soy and honey. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Roast for another 15 mins until the chicken is golden and tender, and juices look sticky. Drizzle with sesame oil, then serve the chicken, broccoli and juices with rice.

PER SERVING 340 kcals, protein 28g, carbs 7g, fat 23g, sat fat 7g, fibre 2g, sugar 6g, salt 2.35g



### Mackerel with sizzled garlic, ginger & tomatoes

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 mins •  
COOK 10 mins **Easy**

- 2 whole mackerel, gutted and cleaned
- 2 tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
- Thumb-sized piece ginger, finely shredded
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 fat red chillies, deseeded if you like, shredded
- bunch spring onions, finely shredded
- 250g pack cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 tsp Chinese rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce, plus more to serve if you like

**1** Heat the grill to High, or fire up the barbecue. Slash the fish a few times on each side, then season with black pepper. Grill or barbecue the fish for 3-5 mins on each side, until charred and cooked through (see Know-how).

**2** Heat the oil in a frying pan (you can put the pan on the barbecue rack), then fry the ginger, garlic and chillies for about 2 mins until the garlic is lightly golden. Take off the heat and toss in the spring onions and cherry tomatoes. Lift the fish onto a plate, splash with the vinegar, then spoon over the contents of the pan and splash with soy sauce.

PER SERVING 586 kcals, protein 40g, carbs 7g, fat 44g, sat fat 8g, fibre 2g, sugar 6g, salt 1.78g

### KNOW-HOW ♦

You'll know that your whole fish is thoroughly cooked when the dorsal fin (the one on the back) pulls away easily.



## Veggie rice pot

SERVES 4 PREP 10 MINS

COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat**

**Superhealthy** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day**

- 1 tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
- 2 peppers (one red, one yellow), deseeded and thickly sliced
- 250g pack shiitake or chestnut mushrooms (I used shiitake)
- 250g long-grain rice (not the easy-cook type)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 heaped tsp five-spice powder
- 3 tbsp dry Sherry (optional)
- 140g frozen petits pois
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 eggs, beaten
- Bunch spring onions, sliced diagonally
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce, or more if you like

1 Boil water in a kettle. Heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan,

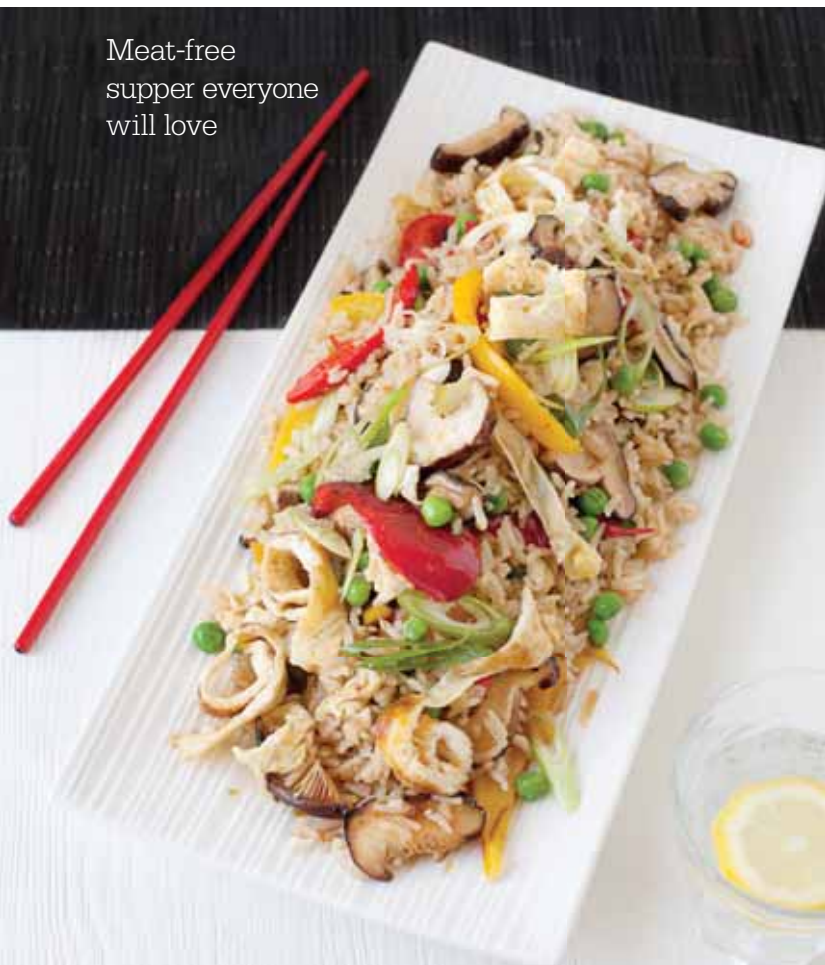
then add the peppers and mushrooms. Fry over a high heat for 3 mins or until starting to soften and turn golden. Turn down the heat, then stir in the rice, garlic and five-spice. Sizzle for 2 mins, then splash in the Sherry, if using, and top up with 350ml hot water.

2 Cover the pan and simmer for 15-20 mins until all of the liquid has gone and the rice is tender, stirring now and again. Add the peas for the final few mins.

3 Heat another frying pan, add a drop of the sesame oil, then add the eggs. Swirl around the pan to make a thin omelette. Once set, turn out onto a board, roll up and shred thinly. Tip the egg and spring onions onto the rice, fluff up with a fork, season with soy sauce and sesame oil, then serve.

PER SERVING 377 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 67g, fat 9g, sat fat 2g, fibre 4g, sugar 9g, salt 1.14g

Meat-free  
supper everyone  
will love



More and more the European commission underlines the importance of organic farming as a means of producing safe food while respecting natural life-cycle systems. Indeed, organic farming is the most environmental friendly method since it contributes to the protection of agro-ecosystem and biodiversity, it improves the quality and natural fertility of soil along with water quality and animal welfare. Organic products are superior to conventional ones in terms of protection for both consumers and producers, since in organic farming the use of synthetic pesticides is not allowed while at the same time organic products provide an additional value to the producer.

Since January 1, 2009 the new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 about the production and labeling of organic products came into force. All companies involved in the production of organic products abide by the law and time and again they are inspected by public authorities and/or approved private inspection bodies. The placement of the EU logo is mandatory from 1 July 2010 for pre-packaged food in E.U.

Especially for Greece, where the environmental damage is yet low, the production of organic products is considered a big opportunity for the natively agricultural production. A lot of companies turn to the production and commerce of organic agricultural products such as pulses, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, olive oil, olives, wines, and a range of other famous products with multiple nutritional value such as mastiha from Chios or saffron from Kozani. Among the producers of organic products, twenty producers participate in the promotional program entitled "Information provision and promotion actions of Organic Products in Third Countries (Russia, Norway and United Arab Emirates)" according to the Council Regulation (EC) 03/2008 and the Commission Regulation (EC) 501/2008. It is a three-year program initiated on February 2010 and will last until February 2013. The main objective of the program is to improve the image of the organic products and to encourage their regular consumption. The program involves advertising and promotion actions for the EU standards of organic farming, the quality and safety of food and for the intrinsic features of European organic products.

As a conclusion it is important to stress once again the importance of promoting organic farming both by the producers and by consumers, in order to promote products of high quality, safety, health and protection of the environment that we live in as well as the environment we will pass on to subsequent generations.

**VISIT US AT GULFOOD HALL 8, STAND C8-25**

During the Gulfood exhibition, a scientific conference on organic food will be held

ASSOCIATION OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS PRODUCERS

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# Go bananas!

Add  matooke bananas to your shopping list to give your next kitchen adventure an African twist.

**M**atooke, also known as Matoke or Ibitoke is a meal consisting of steamed green banana (similar to a plantain), popular in different parts of Africa. The medium-sized green fruits, which are of a specific group of banana, are locally known as matoke, and are a common staple crop.

Now slowly entering the mainstream of international cuisine as a unique, and very healthy staple dish, matooke bananas are not only nutritious with a high content of potassium and dietary fibre, but are also have a very low Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load. With a neutral taste and texture, the green highland bananas – which can be eaten steamed, boiled or fried – are a great alternative to potatoes and can be used in different cuisines catering to different palates, particularly as an accompaniment for vegetables or meat.

Matooke is available at select Lulu hypermarkets, Al Maya stores and Grand hypermarkets. Try this simple recipe to get creative with this nutritious, delicious ingredient.



## NUTRITIONAL INFO

### GLYCEMIC INDEX AND GLYCEMIC LOAD

#### Boiled Plantain (Green)

Glycemic Index: 38  
Glycemic Load: 6.6

#### Boiled Potato

Glycemic Index: 82  
Glycemic Load: 13.2

### Pan Fried Dole® Matooke Banana With Mango Salsa

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 15 MINS

15gm mango ripe diced  
5gm red capsicum diced  
1gm chopped coriander  
5gm diced onions  
10ml olive oil  
2 peeled Dole® Matooke bananas  
A pinch of turmeric powder  
A pinch of salt  
Juice of 1 lemon  
15gm plain flour  
Olive oil, for frying

**1** Mix the mango, capsicum, coriander, onion and olive oil in a small bowl.  
**2** Combine turmeric with lemon juice and salt in water. Slice the Dole® Matooke Banana and soak in the turmeric water for 5 mins, and boil for 1 min, then strain.  
**3** Heat a pan with olive oil, coat the Dole® Matooke banana with flour and pan fry till slightly brown on both the sides. Arrange the banana on the plate, top with mango salsa and serve.

- Recipe from Chef Michel Uwe, Director of Kitchens at Radisson Blu Dubai Deira Creek





# Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice,  
expert cooking tips  
and product picks  
for your pantry.



## Dalia's tip of the month

With all my experience in running bakeries, I've learnt that, while making cookies is simple, the most time consuming part is rolling out the dough. I always make a large amount of extra dough, which I roll into a cylinder shape, wrap in parchment paper, and store in the freezer. This way, whenever I'm in the mood for freshly baked goodness, I can just cut a few slices of the dough and bake away!

## Soup it up



Barakat, the fresh fruit and vegetable producer, has expanded its product range to launch a line of gourmet soups that are healthy too. The 'Chef's Touch' range of soups are available in different flavours like pumpkin and coriander; mushroom and cauliflower;

three-bean flavours; and minestrone (a low-carbohydrate and low-fat option) and are all preservative-free and low in sodium. Prices start from Dhs9, available across select Spinney's supermarkets.

## SMART FOOD SWAPS



## Hot trend!

Move over sriracha sauce, the latest spice set to be all the rage around the world in 2013 is Gochujang – a Korean fermented and pungent red hot pepper paste. This fiery pepper paste is rich in Vitamin C, B2 and beta-carotene, which is known to prevent cancer. Use it as a condiment, or to give fish, chicken, roast meat and salads an intense flavour. Gochujang is available at Korean specialty stores in UAE, including A-Mart (04-3808080).

**Health update>** Since February is Heart disease awareness month, there's no better time to focus on improving heart health. Here are a few tips from Zuzana Stewart, nutritionist at Emirates Home Nursing, on what to eat to prevent cardiovascular disease:

- > Include heart healthy foods such as wholegrains, legumes, and Omega 3-fatty acid foods such as oily fish (salmon), walnuts, flax seeds, avocado and nuts (peanuts, almonds) in your diet – all of which contain complex heart-protective phytonutrients.
- > Sodium is one of the causes of cardiovascular disease, so use herbs, spices and garlic as an alternative to salt, when cooking.
- > Make sure to increase your intake of fruit and vegetables, especially tomatoes, apples and berries, as they are rich in vitamins and antioxidants and help prevent coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease.
- > Maintain a healthy body weight – those who carry weight around their waistline often have higher blood pressure and increased blood levels. A man's waist should not measure more than 102cm for men (92 for Asian men; Asians are genetically more prone to heart disease) and 88cm for women (78cm for Asian women).

## Look what we found!

### 3 great new products for your kitchen



Grocery lists on paper are so last year! Jot down your shopping list on this eco-friendly, portable Boogie board and carry it along the next time you do your monthly shop. Dhs219 at The Change Initiative store.



This gluten-free Passion pasta, flavoured with garlic and parsley, is perfect for a quick pasta supper – just add sauce and veg.

Dhs17.5 at [glutenfree-supermarket.ae](http://glutenfree-supermarket.ae).

Craving pancakes or waffles? These all-natural Shortstacks Pancake and waffle mixes are available in delicious flavours such as banana pudding, sweet potato and strawberry shortcake. Quick and easy to prepare for Friday brunch at home! Dhs30 each at [southernculturefoods.com](http://southernculturefoods.com).



# One ingredient, three ways

We asked Chef Ed doukani Az taj from Ingredients restaurant at Eastern Mangroves Hotel and Spa Abu Dhabi, to take one ingredient (see what we did there?!), and get creative with it. Take a look at what he came up with, using the versatile, seasonal sweet potato.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Ed doukani Az taj hails from Morocco, and began his career at Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo – part of the Alain

Ducasse group of hotels – after studying at the school of hospitality in Monte Carlo. Az taj has since gained over 20 years of experience in Miami, Paris, Cairo, Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia before moving to the UAE in 2010 to take on the executive chef position at Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara. He joined Eastern Mangroves Hotel and Spa Abu Dhabi by Anantara in 2012 as executive chef of the hotel and is in charge of Ingredients restaurant, which offers international cuisine ranging from Asian and Arabic to Indian and European. His cooking style focuses on highlighting the simplicity of ingredients.





## Venison with mashed sweet potato, wild mushroom ragout and black cherry glaze

SERVES 4

720g fillet of venison tenderloin  
200g sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped  
½ cup butter  
3 tbsp honey  
¼ tsp ground cinnamon  
1/4 tsp kosher salt

### FOR THE CHERRY GLAZE

150g black cherries, fresh or canned  
40ml cherry juice  
20ml balsamic vinegar  
10g rosemary, chopped

### FOR THE MUSHROOM RAGOUT

50g butter  
3g salt  
2g pepper  
1 large onion, thinly sliced into half rings  
250g mixed wild mushrooms, sliced  
Affila cress leaves (available in Spinney's)

**1** Add the sweet potatoes to a medium-sized pot filled with water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer until tender, about 8-10 mins. Drain well and return to the pot. Add butter, honey, cinnamon, and salt and beat at medium-low speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Set aside until ready to serve.

**2** Sear the venison in a little olive oil and cook to your preferred doneness in the oven, 5 mins for rare, 10 mins for medium and 15 mins for well done.

**3** Clean the mushrooms and sauté for 3 mins with the butter and onions, in the same pan used for the venison (make sure not to overcook). Season with salt and pepper.

**4** Mix together the cherries, vinegar, juice and rosemary in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Once boiled, reduce heat and simmer until reduced by half, approximately 15 mins, stirring occasionally. If the mixture is too thick, add a little more cherry juice.

**5** To serve, place the mashed sweet potato and the venison next to each other, add the ragout on the side and a generous spoonful of the glaze on the venison. Garnish with affila cress leaves and serve.

## Thai sweet potato massaman curry

SERVES 4

120g Thai massaman curry paste (see recipe or use store-bought)  
4-6 pcs red onion, roasted  
400g sweet potato, roasted  
700ml coconut milk  
5g fresh kaffier lime leaves  
10g red chillies (optional)  
10ml fish or soya sauce (optional)  
20g palm sugar  
20ml cooking oil  
5g roasted cashew nuts (optional)  
5g mint leaves

**1** Stir fry the massaman curry paste with a little cooking oil. Cook until it releases a fragrance and then add the coconut milk and kaffier lime leaves, stirring continuously, until it starts to boil. Season with palm sugar and fish sauce if using. Add the red onions and sweet potato and cook for 5-7 mins.

**2** To serve, place the curry into a plate or bowl and garnish with the cashew nuts, mint leaves, and chillies. Serve hot with steamed Thai jasmine rice. >>

### MAKE YOUR OWN

#### Thai Massaman Curry paste

In a food processor, mix together 100g shallots, ½ cup roasted peanuts, 20g cloves garlic peeled, 2 red big chillies, sliced, 1 thumb-size piece galangal thinly sliced, 1 stalk lemon grass sliced, 1 tsp ground coriander, ½ tbsp ground cumin, ½ tsp whole cumin seeds, 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg, ½ tsp cinnamon, 1/8 tsp ground cloves, 1 tsp Gum masala powder, 1/4 ts ground cardamom, 1 tsp shrimp paste and 2 tbsp cooking oil. Blend well.



## Sweet potato cheesecake, fresh berries and raspberry sauce

SERVES 4

1 cup mashed sweet potatoes  
125g cream cheese, softened  
100g white sugar  
½ tsp cinnamon powder  
½ tsp ginger powder  
2 whole eggs  
1 ½ egg yolks  
½ cup whipping cream  
25g physalis (available in Spinneys and Waitrose outlets)  
25g blueberries  
25g blackberries  
25g raspberries  
25g red currant

### FOR THE RASPBERRY SAUCE

50g white sugar  
65ml water  
125g raspberries

### FOR THE CRUST

1½ tbsp flour  
1 cup graham cracker crumbs, finely crushed  
¼ cup melted butter  
½ cup Graham Cracker-pecan crust  
35g pecans, finely chopped

**1** Add sugar and water to a small saucepan over high heat; stir and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat, and allow syrup to cool completely.

**2** Blend raspberries and syrup until it becomes smooth like a puree. Pour through

a fine sieve or colander into a bowl and discard any fruit pieces.

**3** Preheat oven to 425C and combine all crust ingredients together. Press into a 10-inch spring form pan.

**4** Using a hand held mixer, beat eggs, cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Slowly add in the flour, cinnamon, and ginger, and continue mixing. Then add the whipping cream and sweet potatoes and mix until thoroughly combined. Pour the batter into the prepared crust.

**5** Bake for 15 mins at 175C and then lower heat to 275C and bake for another hour. Turn heat off and leave in the oven to cool for several hours, or cool on a wire rack.

**6** Cut the cake in square shapes and place on the plate. Pour the raspberry sauce next to the cake and garnish with fresh berries. **GF**







# MAZINA

GENERATION CREATION

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Time: 12.30pm to 3.30pm

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WHERE *life* HAPPENS



A detailed photograph of a Moroccan feast. In the center, a large, succulent roasted lamb shoulder with a dark, sticky glaze sits on a thick wooden cutting board. To its right is a large, shallow tagine filled with bright yellow quinoa or couscous, topped with sautéed onions and fresh herbs. Further right is a colorful salad in a pink-rimmed bowl, containing chickpeas, diced tomatoes, spinach, and feta. A small pink bowl of yogurt with pomegranate seeds is also visible. In the background, a silver teapot and glasses of red and clear beverages are set on a patterned purple cloth. The entire scene is set on a rustic wooden table.

Pulled lamb  
shoulder with sticky  
pomegranate glaze,  
recipe p48

# Moroccan feast for a crowd

Keep entertaining simple with this modern menu. The dishes look and taste amazing, you can prepare most of them ahead, and they are cheaper than you think! Recipes CASSIE BEST Photographs PETER CASSIDY



## MENU FOR 5

- Butternut & harissa hummous
- Seeded flatbreads
- Pulled lamb shoulder with sticky pomegranate glaze
- Golden couscous with apricots & crispy onions
- Minty carrot, pistachio & feta salad
- Rose cream & raspberry jellies

**Butternut & harissa hummous**

SERVES 6 • PREP 10 MINS PLUS COOLING •  
COOK 45 MINS Easy V Good for you 1 of 5-a-day

**½ butternut squash about 400g, peeled and cut into 2cm pieces**

**3 garlic cloves, unpeeled**

**2 tbsp olive oil**

**3 tbsp tahini**

**1 tbsp harissa, plus a little extra for drizzling**

**400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed**

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the butternut squash and garlic cloves in a roasting tin, season well and add 100ml water. Cover the tin with foil and bake for 45 mins, until the squash is really tender. Leave to cool.

**2** Tip the squash into a food processor with any juices from the tin. Add the garlic cloves, squeezed out of their skins. Add the remaining ingredients, season with salt according to taste, and blend to a paste.

**3** Scrape the hummous into a bowl. Drizzle with extra harissa before serving.

PER SERVING 155 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 13g, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 0.4g

**Seeded flatbreads**

MAKES 12 • PREP 45 MINS PLUS RISING •  
COOK 30 MINS Easy V Good for you

**7g dried yeast**

**1 tsp caster sugar**

**400g strong white bread flour**

**200g wholemeal bread flour**

**Oil, for greasing**

**1 tbsp nigella seeds (also called black onion seeds or kalonji seeds)**

**2 tbsp sesame seeds**

**1** Mix the yeast with 2 tbsp warm water and sugar, and leave for a few mins. Tip the flours into a large bowl with 1 tsp salt and make a well in the centre. Pour in the yeast mixture and 500ml warm water. Mix with a wooden spoon until it comes together as a dough, then tip onto a work surface and knead for 5-10 mins until smooth and elastic – add a little extra flour if the dough is too sticky. Put the dough in an oiled bowl, cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place to rise for 1 hr until doubled in size.

**2** Tip the dough onto your work surface and knock out all the air. Knead the seeds into the dough until well distributed. Divide the dough into 12 pieces, then roll out each as thinly as you can. Heat a large frying pan, cook the flatbreads for 2 mins or until bubbles appear on the surface, then flip over and cook for 2 mins more. Once all are cooked, wrap in foil and keep for up to a day. Pop in a warm oven to reheat.

PER FLATBREAD 189 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 34g, fat 3g, sat fat none, fibre 3g, sugar 1g, salt 0.4g >>





## Golden couscous with apricots & crispy onions

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 20 MINS

Easy V Low fat Good for you Fibre 1 of 5-a-day

500g couscous

1 vegetable stock cube

2 tsp turmeric

1 tsp ground cinnamon

100g dried apricots, chopped

3 red onions, thinly sliced

1 tsp caster sugar

500ml vegetable or sunflower oil, for frying

Zest and juice 1 lemon

2 tbsp olive oil

Small bunch coriander, chopped

Small handful mint, chopped, and a few leaves reserved

**1** Boil water in a kettle. Tip the couscous into a large bowl, crumble in the stock cube, then add the turmeric, cinnamon and apricots, and season well. Pour over 500ml boiling water,

give everything a quick stir, then cover with cling film and leave for 5 mins.

**2** Put half the sliced onions in a bowl with a good pinch of salt and the sugar, pour over enough boiling water to cover and leave to steep for 10 mins. (This will remove some of the onions' acidity and turn them a beautiful bright pink colour.)

**3** Heat enough oil to come about 5cm up the side of a deep saucepan. Once hot, fry the remaining onions in batches for 1-2 mins until golden and crispy. Drain on kitchen paper and sprinkle with salt.

**4** Use a fork to fluff up the couscous. Drain the steeped onions and stir through the couscous with the lemon zest and juice, olive oil and herbs. Tip onto a serving platter or bowl and scatter with the crispy onions and mint leaves.

PER SERVING 403 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 67g, fat 8g, sat fat 1g, fibre 6g, sugar 11g, salt 0.6g

## Minty carrot, pistachio & feta salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS CHILLING •

COOK 30 MINS Easy V Folate Fibre 1 of 5-a-day

2 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for drizzling  
500g carrots, halved and

cut into chunks

400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

2 tsp ground cumin

Juice ½ lemon

1 tbsp clear honey

Small bunch mint, chopped

2 big handfuls spinach leaves

100g bag shelled pistachios, roughly chopped

200g pack feta, crumbled

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Tip 1 tbsp of the oil, the carrots, chickpeas and cumin onto a baking tray, season and toss to coat. Roast for 30 mins or until the carrots are tender.

**2** Mix together the lemon juice, honey and remaining oil, then pour all over the roasted carrots and chickpeas. Leave to cool. *You can chill the salad at this stage, for up to 1 day; just bring it out of the fridge 1 hr before serving.*

**3** Mix through the mint, spinach leaves and pistachios, and check the seasoning. Scatter the feta over and drizzle with a little extra oil.

PER SERVING 307 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 20g, fat 20g, sat fat 6g, fibre 6g, sugar 10g, salt 1.6g

## Pulled lamb shoulder with sticky pomegranate glaze

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS MARINATING

• COOK 5 HRS Easy Folate Iron

*Cooking the meat really slowly in pomegranate juice makes it meltingly tender, and the juices double up as a sticky-sweet glaze.*

4 garlic cloves, chopped

2 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tbsp dried oregano

1 lemon, quartered, pips removed

1.5kg bone-in lamb shoulder joint

2 red onions, cut into wedges

1 litre-carton pomegranate juice

2 tbsp clear honey

250g natural yoghurt

100g tub pomegranate seeds,

or seeds from 1 fresh pomegranate

Small handful mint leaves, chopped

**1** Put the garlic, cinnamon, cumin, oregano and lemon in a blender with 1 tsp salt and 2 tsp black pepper. Blend until smooth. Put the lamb in a large roasting tin and tip the marinade over the top. Massage all over the lamb and leave for 24 hrs in the fridge, or up to 2 days.

**2** Remove lamb from the fridge 1 hr before cooking. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Scatter the onions around the lamb, tucking some underneath, then pour over the pomegranate juice. Cover the lamb with foil and cook for 4 hrs.

**3** Remove the foil, carefully pour the meaty pomegranate juices from the tin into a large saucepan and add the honey. Increase oven to 220C/200C fan, re-cover the lamb and continue cooking for 30 mins. Meanwhile, bubble the cooking liquid over a high heat until reduced, thick and syrupy – this may take up to 30 mins.

**4** Pour the sticky pomegranate glaze over the lamb and onions and return to the oven for another 30 mins, uncovered, until the glaze is bubbling and just starting to char, and the lamb is really tender. Mix the yoghurt, most of the pomegranate seeds and mint leaves in a small bowl. Shred the lamb at the table and serve with the sticky onions and the minty pomegranate yoghurt. Scatter over the remaining pomegranate seeds.

PER SERVING 668 kcals, protein 46g, carbs 33g, fat 39g, sat fat 19g, fibre 1g, sugar 32g, salt 1.3g >>





Impress your guests  
with new flavour  
combinations





## Rose cream & raspberry jellies


MAKES 6 • PREP 10 MINS PLUS CHILLING •  
COOK 5 MINS  

135g pack raspberry jelly  
500ml double cream  
1 tsp rose water  
12 raspberries, halved  
Drizzle of clear honey  
Small handful mint leaves  
1 tbsp pistachios, chopped

**1** Boil water in a kettle. Break the jelly cubes into a jug, pour over 100ml boiling water and stir to dissolve. Gently warm the cream in a small pan,

then remove from the heat and pour in the jelly mixture. Stir in the rose water, then tip the mixture back into your jug. Divide the jelly between 6 small glasses and chill for 2 hrs or until set. *Can be made 1 day ahead.*

**2** Remove the jellies from the fridge about 20 mins before serving. Divide the raspberries between them, then add a drizzle of honey, a few mint leaves and a sprinkling of pistachios to each.

PER JELLY 501 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 19g, fat 46g, sat fat 28g, fibre 1g, sugar 18g, salt none 

All the flavours  
of Turkish delight

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with  and 

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\*All Valentine packages are inclusive of a glass of sparkling or sparkling rosé wine.

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DUBAI



# Learn to: Bone & roll a leg of lamb



Chef Alyn Williams shares his  
butchery skills and makes a  
delicious spiced lamb roast.  
Photographs DAVID MUNNS



Alyn Williams spent eight years working with Marcus Wareing, first at Petrus and also at The Berkeley. He has also worked for Gordon Ramsay and was head chef at The Groucho Club. His own restaurant, Alyn Williams at the Westbury in Mayfair, opens in September ([westburymayfair.com](http://westburymayfair.com)).

## Slow-cooked leg of lamb with kofta spices, pickled cucumber and peppered yoghurt

SERVES 8 • 3 HOURS + COOLING AND  
RESTING **A little effort**

2.5kg lamb 1 leg, about  
2 tsp cumin seeds  
2 tsp coriander seeds  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
10 saffron strands  
¼ tsp ground turmeric  
20 mint leaves  
3 garlic cloves  
3 lemons, zested  
Sea salt flakes  
75ml olive oil  
250ml greek yoghurt, strained in a  
sieve for 1 hour  
1 lemon juiced  
Couscous to serve  
**PICKLED CUCUMBER**  
1 small cucumber  
125g clear honey  
Dill a bunch, chopped  
50ml white wine vinegar

**1** Heat the oven to 140C/fan 120C. Bone and trim the leg of lamb as shown (right). Grind the dry spices in a spice grinder. Using a mortar and pestle or small food processor, grind the mint with the garlic, lemon and salt then slowly add the olive oil to form a loose paste.

**2** Rub the lamb on all sides with the paste and then the spices. Roll the lamb back into its original shape and tie with kitchen string, as shown. Cook in the oven for 2 hrs, turning occasionally. Turn up the temperature to 180C/fan 160C for the last 10 mins. Remove and rest for 20 mins before carving.

**3** Meanwhile, mix the yoghurt with a good grinding of black pepper, a pinch of salt, and mix with a little lemon juice.

**4** To make the pickled cucumber, grate the cucumber on a box grater using the coarsest side. Mix with a good pinch of salt and leave to drain in a sieve for 30 mins. Bring the honey to a boil and heat until deep golden brown, about 10 mins, then carefully add the vinegar and leave to cool. Mix with the cucumber and the chopped dill.

**5** Serve the pickled cucumber and peppered yoghurt with the lamb and couscous.

PER SERVING 554 kcs, protein 48.6g, carbs 14.4g, fat 34g, sat fat 13.8g, fibre 0.4g, salt 0.64g





1 Using a small sharp knife, cut out the small triangular bone at the end of the leg and discard – your joint may already have this removed.



2 Cut off the section of meat at the bottom of the shank – you don't have to do this but it makes for a neater presentation.



3 Cut a deep incision through the meat along the length of the bone.



4 Free the meat by cutting it away from the bone – keeping the knife as close as possible to the bone.



5 Keep working around the bone until you can release and remove the whole thing.



6 Flatten the lamb out by making large cuts into, but not through, the thickest parts of the meat and opening them out like a book.



7 Make deep vertical cuts along the meat but make sure not to pierce through to the other side.



8 Rub the lamb all over the cut surface with the paste and then the spices from the recipe (left).



9 Roll the meat back into its original shape and tie along the lamb at intervals with kitchen string. [GF](#)

# Love is... good food!

Isn't it perfect that Valentine's Day is on a Thursday this year? If you're planning a night in with that special someone, don't spend ages in the kitchen when you could be enjoying time together. This clever menu looks the part, but can be made in under an hour! Recipes CASSIE BEST  
Photographs JONATHAN KENNEDY

## Seared garlic seafood with spicy harissa bisque

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 5 MINS **Easy**

400g can lobster bisque  
1 tbsp harissa  
Zest and juice ½ lime  
2 tbsp single cream, plus a little extra for drizzling  
8 large raw king prawns, peeled  
6 scallops, roe removed  
1 tbsp garlic butter  
Small handful coriander, leaves picked  
½ red chilli, thinly sliced  
Toasted bread, to serve

Amazingly  
quick to make

**1** Heat the lobster bisque, harissa and lime juice in a small pan until bubbling. Add the cream, reduce the heat and keep warm while you cook the seafood.

**2** Season the prawns and scallops. Heat the garlic butter in a frying pan until starting to foam. Add the seafood and cook for 1 min on each side until the prawns are pink and the scallops are cooked and starting to brown, but still have a little bounce.

**3** To serve, pile the prawns and scallops into the centre of 2 shallow soup bowls, pour around the spicy bisque, scatter with a few coriander leaves, chilli slices, lime zest and a drizzle of cream. Serve with toasted bread.

PER SERVING 457 kJ, protein 31g, carbs 8g, fat 32g, sat fat 17g, fibre 3g, sugar 4g, salt 2g

Gorgeous  
Valentine's Day  
menu – ready in  
under an hour

### MENU FOR TWO

- Seared garlic seafood with spicy harissa bisque.
- Sticky fig lamb cutlets with warm bean & couscous salad.
- Sweetheart choc & hazelnut sandwiches



**Sticky fig lamb cutlets with warm bean & couscous salad**SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS **Easy**  **Iron**  **2 of 5-a-day****100g couscous****French trimmed lean 7-rack of lamb**  
(ask your butcher to trim for you)**2 tbsp olive oil****200g pack green beans, stem ends trimmed****4 tbsp fig jam or conserve, mixed with 1-2 tbsp water****2 tbsp balsamic vinegar****½ small red onion, thinly sliced****Handful cherry tomatoes, halved****Zest and juice ½ lemon****Small handful mint leaves, most torn**

**1** Heat a frying pan and bring a small saucepan of water to the boil. Put the couscous in a bowl, pour over 100ml boiling water from the kettle, cover with a tea towel and set aside. Cut between the lamb bones so you have 7 trimmed lamb cutlets. Rub a little of the oil and some seasoning onto each cutlet. Cook the green beans in the boiling water for 4 mins, then drain.

**2** Once the frying pan is hot, cook the lamb for 3 mins each side, brushing with

the fig jam as they cook. Add the vinegar in the final 1 min of cooking, transfer the lamb to a plate and leave to rest. Bubble any remaining juices in the pan until sticky.

**3** Mix the couscous with a fork to fluff it up, add the beans, red onion, tomatoes, lemon zest and juice, the torn mint and the remaining oil. Season and mix well. Divide the salad between 2 plates and top with the lamb cutlets. Drizzle over the remaining sticky juices from the pan and scatter over a few whole mint leaves.

PER SERVING 631 kcals, protein 39g, carbs 55g, fat 28g, sat fat 9g, fibre 4g, sugar 29g, salt 0.3g >>



Smart modern  
take on lamb

## Sweetheart choc & hazelnut sandwiches

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 5  
MINS **Easy**

4 slices from a small sliced  
brioche loaf  
3 tbsp chocolate hazelnut spread  
1 large egg  
75ml whole milk  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 tbsp caster sugar  
2 tbsp chopped toasted hazelnuts  
1 tbsp butter  
Icing sugar, for dusting  
Ice cream and raspberries,  
to serve

**1** Thickly spread 2 of the brioche slices with the chocolate hazelnut spread, then top with the remaining slices to make 2 sandwiches. Use a large heart-shaped cutter to cut the sandwiches into hearts.

**2** Whisk the egg, milk, vanilla and caster sugar in a wide, shallow bowl. Tip the hazelnuts onto a plate. Dip the sandwiches into the egg mixture, leave for 1-2 mins each side to allow the brioche to soak up the liquid, then dip one side of each sandwich into the nuts. *The sandwiches can be chilled like this, covered loosely with cling film, for up to 1 hour.*

**3** Heat the butter in a wide frying pan until melted and foaming. Add the sandwiches and cook for 1-2 mins each side until golden brown and puffed up. Dust with a little icing sugar and serve with ice cream and raspberries.

PER SERVING 524 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 51g, fat 30g, sat fat 11g, fibre 2g, sugar 32g, salt 0.9g **CF**

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cover  
recipe!





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# Dinner for two



No one does romance like the French. This Valentine's Day, cook up a traditional three-course French meal for your loved one at home, with these recipes from executive sous chef Benoit Cart from Le Classique, Emirates Golf Club.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR



French national Benoit Cart, executive sous chef of French fine dining eatery, Le Classique at Emirates Golf Club, has mastered the art of French cooking over the last 13 years. Commencing his career with an apprenticeship at a bistro in Limoges, France, Benoit perfected his

culinary skills by working his way through traditional brasseries and seasonal restaurants in various regions in France. His first venture in Dubai was in 2007 at Andiamo, Grand Hyatt Dubai, after which he joined Rostang, The French Brasserie at Atlantis Hotel at the Palm, Dubai, to work as chef de cuisine, before joining Le Classique in 2011.

## Quenelles of Seabass

SERVES 2

**250g sea bass (or other mild white fish), cut into rough 1 inch cubes**

**25g butter**

**2 eggs**

**½ cup liquid cream**

**Fine sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste**

**Espelette or cayenne pepper**

**1 quart lobster bisque or fish soup  
(Available at select supermarkets)**

**FOR THE PANADE**

**100ml milk**

**25g butter**

**50g flour, sifted**

**2 egg yolks**

**Salt, to taste**

**1** To make the panade, bring the milk and butter to a boil over medium heat, in a large, wide saucepan. Add a generous pinch of salt, mix well and remove from heat. Add flour all at once, constantly stirring it with a wooden spoon or heat resistant spatula. Place the pan back over the heat and cook, stirring constantly again, to make sure the mixture becomes dry. Remove the pan from the heat and keep stirring occasionally to let it cool a bit. Beat the egg yolks and add into the mixture one by one.

**2** To make the quenelle mixture, slice the fish and mince.

**3** At medium-low speed, beat the panade, one quarter-sized chunk at a time, into the fish. Then add the butter in chunks. It should look like a rough paste, sticking a bit to the bowl, with peaks. Add the eggs, one at a time and season with salt and cayenne pepper.

**4** Form the quenelle by using two tablespoons and spooning the mixture (one into the other) to form an oval shape. Poach for 6-7 mins in a large pot of simmering hot water. Remove them with a slotted spoon and drain on a paper towel.

**5** Preheat oven to 185C. Meanwhile bring the lobster bisque to a simmer. Add the quenelles to the lobster bisque and place in a baking dish. Make sure the quenelles are surrounded by the hot bisque. Bake for 10 mins, or until the quenelles have puffed up, slightly brown on top, and have absorbed some of the bisque. Serve immediately.

## CHEF'S TIP

When making the quenelle mixture, ensure all ingredients are cold, except for the butter – which should be room temperature. Be gentle when making the quenelle. If you find it a bit hard you could simply make it using an ice cream scoop.



## Roasted duck magret with rhubarb compote and roast pear and salsify

SERVES 2

500g rhubarb  
1 vanilla pod  
25g sugar  
2 pears  
4 pcs long fresh salsify (Available at Waitrose and organic stores)  
2 ducks magret  
1 star anise  
25g thyme  
25g parsley  
25g butter

**1** To make the rhubarb compote, peel and dice the rhubarb, cooking slowly for 30 mins with the sugar. Slice the vanilla pods, remove the seeds and add to the rhubarb mixture.

**2** Peel the salsify and the pears.

**3** Heat the oven to 180C. Score the skin of the duck fillets with a sharp knife and season well with salt and pepper.

**4** Heat a non-stick frying pan and place the duck breasts in, skin-side down. Fry for 6-7 mins, then turn and add the thyme, star anise and butter. Allow this to melt, basting the duck with the juices, then transfer everything to a small roasting tin and finish in the oven for 5-6 mins if you want it rare, or 10-12 mins for well done.

**5** Cook the whole salsify in chicken stock for 12 mins. Pan-fry the salsify and pears in a pan with butter, season and add some chopped parsley when the duck is ready.

**6** Slice the duck and serve with the vegetables and compote on the side. >>

### KNOW-HOW

Duck magret is the breast from a mallard or barbary duck. It is available in select local supermarkets as fillets.





## White chocolate shell with pear crumble

SERVES 2

200g white chocolate  
2 medium size pears  
125g sugar  
25g butter

### FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE

125ml milk  
60ml cream  
25g dark chocolate  
100g milk chocolate  
5g cocoa powder  
50g hazelnut praline paste  
15g butter

### FOR THE CRUMBLE

50g butter  
25g soft brown sugar  
50g almond powder  
50g flour  
2g salt

**1** Melt chocolate to 30C. Add one ladle of melted chocolate to a small metal bowl, and swirl the bowl around to make sure the chocolate sticks to the inside – taking the circular shape of the bowl – and doesn't remain in the centre. After 15 mins or once the chocolate has hardened, slowly turn the bowl upside down to release the shell. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

**2** To make the caramelised pear, add sugar to a pan and cook on low heat till you get a golden caramel. Add butter and pear slices. Mix together and set aside.

**3** Make the chocolate sauce by boiling the cream and milk. Slowly add in all ingredients so that it becomes a smooth, glossy texture.

**4** Mix all the crumble ingredients together and place in a baking tray. Cook in the oven at 180C for 15-20 mins to make a golden crumble. Set aside to cool.

**5** To serve, place a little crumble on the plate, followed by a layer of pears. Add a spoonful of ice cream and then place the shell on top. Pour the chocolate sauce on top when serving. [GF](#)





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# Treats for two

Indulge yourself and your partner – these divine desserts will hit the spot.

## Chocolate truffles

MAKES 16 • PREP 15 MINS • NO COOK 

*You can add other flavours to the truffles – try chopped walnuts, dried apricots or raisins, and a splash of vanilla.*

**100g plain or milk chocolate**

**75ml condensed milk**

**100g Madeira cake crumbs**

**50g ground almonds**

**100g icing sugar**

**Cocoa and icing sugar, to decorate**

**1** Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Once it is melted, add the remaining ingredients.

**2** Roll into walnut-size balls with your hands and pop into the fridge on a plate to chill and set. Once set, roll in cocoa or icing sugar.

*Will keep in the fridge for 1 week.*

PER TRUFFLE 120 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 17g, fat 6g, sat fat 2g, fibre none, sugar 15g, salt 0.07g

MAKES A  
GREAT GIFT



**Balsamic blueberries  
with vanilla ice cream**SERVES 2 • PREP 10 mins • COOK 5  
mins **Easy** *Poaching blueberries really brings out their flavour, especially with a dash of balsamic vinegar. Serve warm or cold over good-quality, shop-bought ice cream.***125g blueberries**  
**1 tbsp caster sugar**  
**1 tsp balsamic vinegar**  
**4 scoops good-quality vanilla ice cream**  
**Crisp biscuits, to serve****1** Tip the blueberries into a pan with the sugar, vinegar and 1 tbsp water. Heat very gently for 1-2 mins until the berries soften, but don't burst. Set aside until ready to serve.**2** Spoon over the ice cream and serve with crisp biscuits.

PER SERVING (without biscuits) 262 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 36g, fat 12g, sat fat 8g, fibre 1g, sugar 35g, salt 0.19g

Ready in a flash



Quick and easy

**Red white & blue jellies**SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS PLUS  
CHILLING • COOK 5 MINS **Easy** *These glamorous jellies look really special.***400g strawberries, trimmed  
and hulled**  
**85g caster sugar juice**  
**½ lemon**  
**2 gelatine leaves**  
**50ml double cream**  
**1-2 tsp icing sugar**  
**Handful blueberries, to serve****1** Place the strawberries, caster sugar and lemon juice in a pan with 100ml water. Bring to the boil, then take off the heat and use a spoon to skim away

any scum that rises to the surface.

Press the mixture through a fine sieve into a large measuring jug. Then fill the jug with boiling water to get 300ml of strawberry juice.

**2** Meanwhile, cover the gelatine with plenty of cold water, then leave to soak for 5 mins until softened. Squeeze out any excess liquid, add leaves into the hot strawberry juice and stir until dissolved.**3** Pour the jelly into serving glasses and leave in the fridge for at least 3 hrs to set. Just before serving, whip the cream with the icing sugar until soft peaks form. Dollop over the jelly and sprinkle with the blueberries to serve.

PER SERVING 375 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 60g, fat 14g, sat fat 8g, fibre 2g, sugar 60g, salt 0.10g &gt;&gt;

## Sorbet fizz

SERVES 2 • PREP 5 MINS • NO COOK



**2 strawberries, sliced**  
**4 scoops raspberry sorbet**  
**100ml sparkling elderflower drink**

**1** Arrange the strawberry slices in the bottom of 2 pretty, long-stemmed glasses, then top each with 2 scoops of raspberry sorbet. Pour over the elderflower drink and serve straight away.

PER SERVING 136 kcals, protein none, carbs 35g, fat none, sat fat none, fibre none, sugar 33g, salt 0.04g

## MAKE IT TROPICAL

### Asian fruit sorbet ♥

Spoon 2 **tbsp chopped pineapple** and  $\frac{1}{2}$  **passion fruit** into the bottom of each glass. Top each with 2 **scoops mango sorbet**, 50ml each **pineapple juice** and **coconut milk** and a splash of **Malibu**, if you like.

Stunningly simple







Wow-factor  
dessert

### Hazelnut meringues with hazelnut praline & chocolate sauce

SERVES 2 ● PREP 25 mins plus cooling ● COOK  
2-2¼ hrs **A little effort** 🍳

#### FOR THE MERINGUES

2 large egg whites  
½ tsp lemon juice  
50g golden caster sugar  
50g icing sugar  
25g hazelnuts, ground

#### FOR THE HAZELNUT PRALINE CREAM

50g caster sugar  
50g hazelnuts  
75ml whipping cream

#### FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE

25g golden caster sugar  
25g cocoa powder  
25g dark chocolate, finely chopped  
Icing sugar or cocoa powder, to serve

**1** Heat oven to 120C/100C fan. For the meringues, whisk egg whites with the lemon juice until soft peaks form. Add the caster sugar and continue whisking until stiff, add the icing sugar and ground nuts, then gently fold through until evenly combined. Line a baking tray with baking

paper and pipe or spoon out rounds of meringue into 7cm discs. You need 3 rounds per person. Bake for 1½-2 hrs until crisp outside, but still soft in the centre. Leave to cool.

**2** To make the praline, warm a small, heavy-based pan over a medium heat and cook the sugar until it melts and turns a caramel colour. Swirl the hazelnuts around the pan (be careful, the sugar is very hot) and allow to caramelise and go brown, about 2 mins. Pour the mixture out onto a tray lined with baking paper. Leave to cool.

**3** Make the chocolate sauce by heating together 75ml water, caster sugar and the cocoa powder until boiling. Pour over the chocolate and whisk well until smooth.

**4** To serve, whisk the cream until soft peaks form. Finely chop the cooled praline by hand or in a food processor. Stir most of it through the cream, setting a little aside. Place a meringue disc on each plate and top with a little of the cream. Add another disc, more cream, then the final disc. Top with icing sugar, cocoa powder and some of the reserved chopped praline, then spoon around some chocolate sauce.

PER SERVING 876 kcs, protein 10g, carbs 110g, fat 47g, sat fat 15g, fibre 4g, sugar 103g, salt 0.29g **GF**



ADVERTISING FEATURE

## COFFEE AND CAKE!

Nothing is more enjoyable than kicking back with a decadent dessert followed by a delicious cup of Continental coffee.

### Chocolate pecan fondants

SERVES 2 ● PREP 20 mins ●  
COOK 20 mins **Easy** 🍳

50g butter, plus extra for greasing  
Cocoa powder, for dusting  
150g bar dark chocolate (50% cocoa solids is fine), chopped into chunks  
1 egg, beaten  
2 tbsp plain flour  
2 tbsp pecan nuts, toasted and chopped very finely  
1 tbsp golden caster sugar

**1** Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Butter 2 individual pudding basins (about 200ml capacity), then dust generously with cocoa powder. Melt chocolate with the butter in a bowl over simmering water, or in a microwave, and stir until smooth. Gradually stir in the egg, then flour, nuts, sugar and a pinch of salt, and beat gently until everything is combined, but still runny.  
**2** Divide the mixture between the pudding basins. These can be chilled for up to a day ahead. Bake for 15 mins (or 18 mins if chilled). Turn onto small plates and serve with ice cream. Fondants should be cooked on the outside and molten in the middle.



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# The London Dairy dessert series

## #2 So cheesy!

Cheesecake makes an unusual, but delicious, complement to an indulgent scoop of chocolate brownie delight ice cream, as Sanjaya Dhanushka ER Rathnayake, senior pastry sous chef at Le Meridien Hotel shows us.



### Chocolate brownie delight ice cream on creamy cheesecake

SERVES 4

250g Philadelphia cheese  
50g sugar  
125ml whipping cream  
2 gelatin sheets  
Zest and juice of 2 lemons  
200g orange marmalade  
**FOR THE CARAMEL SAUCE**  
100g sugar  
100ml whipping cream  
20g butter

- 1** Beat the cheese with sugar for 5 mins at medium speed.
- 2** Whip the cream and set aside
- 3** Soak the gelatin in cold water for 5 mins.
- 4** Fold the cheese, lemon juice and zest into the whipped cream mixture.
- 5** Melt the gelatin in the microwave for 30 seconds with 100g of the cream mixture and combine together.
- 6** Using a piping bag, pipe a little of the cream mixture in a martini glass, and then add 1 tsp of orange marmalade. Repeat process twice and refrigerate for 2 hrs.
- 7** Cook the sugar till it forms a caramel texture. Slowly pour in the whipped cream and boil for 2 mins. Add the butter and keep stirring for another 2 mins. Set aside at room temperature.
- 8** When ready to serve, add 1 tsp of the orange marmalade, a scoop of the ice cream and drizzle caramel sauce on top.

**Next month, look out for the recipe with**  
Chocolate hazelnut ice cream



## MEET THE CHEF



 To see a step-by-step video on making this dish, log on to Facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme or Facebook.com/LondonDairy



Le Meridien Dubai

Sanjaya Dhanushka ER Rathnayake, senior pastry sous chef at Le Meridien Dubai, began his journey as a pastry chef over 14 years ago, and chose the profession not only because he has a sweet tooth, but because he enjoys using his creativity on a day-to-day basis. After working in his native Sri Lanka for four years, Sanjaya decided to make his way to Doha to continue his career as a Bakery and pastry chef at the Al Ghazal Club. He then relocated to Dubai to work as the Junior assistant pastry chef at the Intercontinental Hotel Group in Festival City, before joining Le Meridien in June 2012.

### CHEF'S TIP:

*"Warm caramel sauce pairs well with the soft texture of creamy desserts."*

### Two other ways to enjoy London Dairy's Chocolate Brownie Delight Ice Cream



1 Sprinkle pecan nuts and drizzle dark chocolate sauce over a scoop to turn into a gourmet treat.



2 A scoop over warm apple tart offers a delightful combination of textures and temperatures.



#### CHOCOLATE BROWNIE DELIGHT ICE CREAM

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# Gourmet Lifestyle

Travel, global cuisines, health, interviews, kitchens and more



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## IN THIS SECTION

- \* How Pierre Gagnaire turned failure into success, **P72**
- \* Inside the kitchen of a Jordanian foodie, **P78**
- \* 3 essential epicurean experiences in Hong Kong, **P87**
- \* Discover Portugal's culinary offerings, **P90**



# Choc talk

Ten fun facts about (almost) everyone's favourite treat. By Nicola Monteath.

## 4 **HAPPINESS FIX**

Lovely Ranganath, senior nutritionist at HealthTrendz, at the healthy meal delivery program at Dubai World Trade Centre, says that chocolate contains traces of phenylethylalanine (PEA), a stimulant similar to amphetamine, which your body releases when you are in love – this is why chocolate is known to lift moods. Low levels of PEA have been linked to depression.

## 1 **WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!**

In ancient Mexico, cacao beans were held in high value by people of the Mayans, Aztec and Toltec civilisations, and as a result were used as currency to pay for commodities and taxes. Tomas Prenosil, CEO of Swiss chocolate brand, Confiserie Sprüngli tells us that Montezuma II (an Aztec emperor) was known as the chocolate king during that time, as he was one of the wealthiest men and had nearly a billion cacao beans. Chocolate was invented by the Aztecs, from cacao beans (or cocoa beans in English), and was previously known as 'xocolatl', but it was only consumed as a drink and not in the smooth, solid form we indulge in nowadays.

## 2 **SENSORY OVERLOAD**

Cocoa beans contain 300 different flavours and 400 separate aromas. It takes approximately 400 cocoa beans to make one pound of chocolate, says Isabelle Jaouen, managing director of Forrey and Galland.



## 3 **CHOCOLATE CELEBRATIONS**

There are three different chocolate days celebrated around the world. July 7 is widely known as the definitive Chocolate Day, while National Chocolate Day is celebrated in US on October 28, and September 4 is also celebrated globally as World Chocolate Day. Well, the more excuses to eat chocolate we have, the better, we think!

## 5 **IT'S ALL WHITE!**

While many believe white chocolate is made in the same way as milk and dark chocolate, it is, in fact, not. White chocolate has zero cacao solids, no caffeine, and is actually made up of cocoa butter, milk solids, sugar and flavourings. Cocoa butter is the ingredient that allows chocolate to remain solid at room temperature, in spite of its low melting point (which is just below body temperature) – this is why white chocolate has the same texture as its counterparts.



**6 THE DARKER, THE BETTER**

Cocoa beans are rich in flavanols – antioxidants that prevent cell and organ damage – which is why the higher the cocoa content, the healthier a chocolate is. Flavanols also guard against heart diseases, and lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. According to Isabelle, dark chocolate helps improve blood circulation as well.

**7 A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND**

According to Lovely, Aztecs used the beans in many of their medicinal concoctions to treat common ailments including PMS. Chocolate contains magnesium which is a mineral that helps improve heart health, bowel movements, muscle relaxation and relief from menstrual cramping.

**8 CHOCOLATE BIGGIES**

The Swiss are the world's leaders in chocolate consumption and eat an average of 12kgs of chocolate annually, per person. But, the record for the world's biggest chocolate bar goes to Thorntons, a British chocolate company, who made a Guinness world record on October 12 2011 by making the world's biggest chocolate bar for their 100th birthday. The milk chocolate was poured into a stainless steel mould by over 50 people over approximately 10 hours, with a further three days to cool off and set. The chocolate bar is the equivalent of 72,406 standard bars (80g each), weighs over 12,770 lb (5,792kgs), stands tall at 13 feet (4 metres) and has a total of 29 million calories!

*Chocolate is the first luxury. It has childhood memories, and that grin-inducing feeling of getting a reward for being good wrapped up in it! ♡*


–American TV actress Mariska Hargitay

**9 THE BITTER TRUTH**

Chocolate contains theobromine – a mild stimulant with a diuretic action. This stimulant is also what makes chocolate toxic to animals such as dogs, cats, parrots and horses.

**10 BAKING SECRETS**

Dark chocolate is said to be a better option for baking, when compared to milk chocolate, as it has a more intense flavour. Use milk chocolate for fondants or as a drizzle over desserts.

Bittersweet or semi-sweet baking chocolate is great if you prefer dark chocolate with a hint of sweetness, whereas unsweetened chocolate is good in sweets or cakes that require chocolate with a more bitter, strong flavour. 





# A star-studded journey

Holder of multiple Michelin stars, French chef Pierre Gagnaire firmly believes that if you know your path and work hard, you can rise from the shadows of failure. He talks to Nicola Monteath about his rocky road to success.

Pierre Gagnaire arrives at his interview in his Dubai establishment, Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire at InterContinental Dubai Festival City, and makes it a point to greet his team before sitting down for our chat over a cup of coffee. I will learn later on in the interview that it is this attitude towards his team that has stood him in good stead through his career ups and downs.

With his striking blue eyes, French charm and energetic persona and you wouldn't think he's a day older than 40, but Pierre continues to work hard and succeed, even at the age of 62! The talented chef has been working in the culinary field for a number of years, having started at the age of just 15, but Pierre isn't one of those chefs who always knew this is what he wanted to do. However, with his parents in the restaurant business, it was something of an inevitability for the young man.

Pierre grew up in Loire Valley in France and after many apprenticeships in different restaurants around France, he finally followed his parent's footsteps by taking over the family restaurant – Le Clos Fleuri, a one-Michelin star restaurant in Saint-Étienne (a city in eastern central France) in 1976, going on to open his own restaurant in Paris in 1981, which earned him two more Michelin stars over the course of the next decade.

It wasn't always a bed of roses for Pierre, however. Having lost his three Michelin stars in 1996, which was reportedly because he had spread himself too thin and therefore the quality of the restaurants had suffered, he went bankrupt and as a result, had to close down both his restaurants.

The eager and hardworking chef took this fall as a new beginning however, and in the same year, he opened an eponymous new restaurant in Paris, and won back the Michelin stars he had lost in just two years.

He later co-founded the highly commended Sketch in London, before venturing out to other countries, and taking over the management of a second restaurant in Paris, Gaya Rive Gauche par Pierre Gagnaire.

He is now a highly respected name in the gastronomical world, widely known for his acquisition of three-Michelin stars, and multitude of restaurants across the globe, from England and Paris to Tokyo, Moscow and Hong Kong, to name just a few cities. His restaurant in Paris has also secured a position in the World's 50 best restaurants list for years, holding in at number 17 in 2012.

Here, we try and translate his broken English peppered with French phrases, to get to know the person behind the brand name.



**What would you credit your long-lasting success to?**

It is all the consequence of my hard work and effort, but I would also credit my success to my team. I always say you're nothing when you're by yourself. A team helps you create beautiful dishes, and you learn how to work together and share knowledge.

**You've had an up and down relationship with Michelin stars – how important do you think this sort of recognition is?**

It is very important to have Michelin stars as it's a benchmark that judges a chef's work. The system is great, and increases a chef's recognition, as people then want to dine at the restaurant and indulge in fine gastronomy. I'm sure when the Michelin star rating arrives in Dubai, Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire will win two-stars because of the quality of produce and food we serve.

**Your cooking style seems to have a modern, fusion flair. Do you agree?**

Yes, my cooking has a very contemporary twist to it, but it is also relative to the produce available to me. I like to focus on locally available produce, and it used to be quite hard, especially when we first opened up in Dubai as the produce was limited. However Dubai is growing and now offers much more produce to work with. I like to offer dishes that give guests an emotional feeling; when you go dining, you should be excited to see what is on the menu. It's all an experience, from the quality of service offered to the aroma, and the taste of the dishes.

**Molecular gastronomy seems to be a fascinating concept for you. How has this influenced your cooking style?**

French chemist Hervé This (the founding father of molecular gastronomy, who has influenced chefs such as Heston Blumenthal) is a great guy, and we work together a lot. He gives me information about any new concept that he comes across – related to molecular gastronomy – and has taught me everything I needed to know about this food science. He keeps me knowledgeable and I have infused a lot of these concepts into my cooking.

**How do you bring the Pierre Gagnaire signature to all the varied markets worldwide, that you have a presence in?**

It's simple! We try to make sure we are consistent in the overall standard and quality of

food offered. The teams are obviously different all over the world, but the food served is according to my signature style. For example, a few months ago we were revisiting the menus in several of my restaurants, and one of the chefs had created a Foie gras croquet which I thought matched my style perfectly. We like to experiment with different ingredients to offer creative and innovative dishes in all our restaurants around the globe. The menus are a reflection of the chefs' personalities; they all have something significant that they bring to the table.

**What is your top tip for young chefs who want to reach your stature?**

Hard work pays off! It takes a lot of hard work, time and effort, and you can successfully achieve this sort of stature if you work closely with a team and can rely on them.

**With so many restaurants around the world, you're constantly on the move and naturally, quite busy. How and when do you relax?**

My family was in the business, and I remember not wanting to have the same career my parents chose as they were always busy. But I do make it a point to take two weeks off every year in August, I like and just relax, go grocery shopping and cook meals for my family.

The dishes I make depend on the city I'm in. For example, if I were in Dubai, I would make a simple hummous, lamb or veal with dates and ice cream made with camel milk.

**What can we expect from you next?**

For now I'm just concentrating on my book, *Pierre Gagnaire: 175 home recipes with a twist* (Flammarion), that has just hit stores in Europe.

**SIGNATURE RECIPES****Salpicon of Omani prawn and popcorn soup**

SERVES 4

500g (20-30 per kg) Omani prawns  
100 olive oil  
240g of ricotta

**FOR THE POPCORN SOUP**

1kg fresh sweet corn, from a raw corn on the cob  
200g fresh white onion  
100ml olive oil  
500ml cream  
500ml milk  
Salt and pepper to season  
Popcorn to garnish

**1** To make the popcorn soup, slice the onion and cook on low heat with olive oil. Meanwhile, remove corn from the cob. Add corn to the olive oil and cook slowly.

**2** Add milk and cream and cook for 30 mins on a low heat. Blend and add seasoning.

**3** Peel shrimps and dice into 1cm pieces. Pan fry in hot olive oil.

**3** To serve, place the shrimp on the border of a deep plate and pour popcorn soup into the flate. Finish with a spoon of ricotta and sprinkle popcorn on top before serving. >>





## **The Veal**

SERVES 4


**1 kg veal back**  
**60ml olive oil**  
**280g butter**  
**4 cinnamon stick**  
**4 pc baby artichoke**  
**Juice of 4 lemon**  
**120g chanterelle mushrooms**  
**200g ratte potato (Available at Market and Platters deli)**  
**8 sprigs of thyme**  
**4 garlic cloves**  
**800ml veal juice or beef stock cube**  
**40 baby spinach leaves**

**1** Season veal back with salt, and sear both sides of the veal in a cooking pan with oil, until it becomes a light brown colour. Add one spoon of butter and the cinnamon stick and place the veal in the oven for 5 mins at 180C.

**2** While the veal is cooking, clean the artichokes and soak in a bowl filled with water and lemon juice.

**3** Clean the mushrooms and set aside. Cook the ratte potato by boiling in salted water until the skin is easily removable. Peel and cut into small pieces and cook it in the rest of the butter, with thyme and garlic. Set aside.

**4** Remove the veal from the oven and set aside for 15 mins. Add the veal juice to the cooking pan and set aside to reduce.

**5** Add the chanterelle mushrooms to the potato pieces and allow them to cook for 3 more mins. Cut the meat into slices, and place on a plate, pour the sauce on top and then garnish with the potato and mushrooms. Add the spinach leaves and the raw artichokes cut into very thin slices, on top. 



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which takes me far again,  
when we met right here

All my life isn't enough time  
to search for divine words  
that would describe to you  
the way I feel about you. ☺

I stood beneath a falling star  
and wish I was a poet  
who would express himself  
in beautiful confession.

Forever takes me by a minute  
while I'm always on about you. ♥  
And I'm falling even more in love  
with everything you or I do.

I don't want ever to let you go  
in my heart ♥ I'll always hold.  
I'll never let you slip away,  
and leave nothing left untold.

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it's time to swear I love you.  
It's time to open my heart again,  
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## MY KITCHEN

# Josceline Dimbleby

Cookery writer Josceline Dimbleby's kitchen is central to her life, as she explains to Vanessa Berridge.

One of Britain's best-loved cookery writers, Josceline Dimbleby has sold more than two million recipe books. Her latest, *Orchards in the Oasis* (Quadrille), recently won a Guild of Food Writers award.

Formerly married to political commentator David Dimbleby, Jossy (as she is known to her family and friends) has three children, including Leon restaurateur Henry Dimbleby, and six grandchildren. She now shares her west London home with her partner, Johnny Culme-Seymour.

### What do you use your kitchen for the most?

I bought the house from Sarah Raven, the gardener-cook, so she had already planned the garden and opened up the kitchen. Cookery writing has always been part of my life, so I designed the kitchen to work and live in with my family – it's not a separate professional space. I didn't want anything streamlined or functional looking, although it had to be very practical.

### Any changes you made?

I built on a bow window to house a balcony for my bedroom above, and changed the kitchen around completely, putting the island and stove in the middle of the room.

An architect friend did the drawings of the cupboards, and the builders made the base units. The central island means I can look out and talk to people when I'm preparing food and cooking.

### Was the dining area always there?

I'd always had a sofa in the kitchen, where everyone can sit around while you cook – and where I can flake out when I'm exhausted. There wasn't enough space here initially, so when the grandchildren began to arrive, we extended the kitchen to create a new dining area, where I could also put the dresser. My sofa is now in the bay, which opens onto the garden.

### Any other ways in which you personalised your kitchen?

Because I'm tall, I had all the work surfaces and chopping board made higher. I don't like everything hidden away, so I put in open shelves and have all my bits and pieces to do with food and cooking visible.

### What about lighting?

I am a lighting obsessive, and can't stand bright lights. I have hidden low-voltage lights above the kitchen's work surfaces, and have created pools of light elsewhere – a light in a flowerpot

shining on an Indian embroidery, and a desk light to highlight shelves of spices in an alcove.

I set the scene before a meal like a theatre, turning off all the kitchen lights to make it virtually invisible, and using candles and dimmed lights in the dining area.

### How did you choose your materials?

I used lino tiles for the floor, which are warm to the feet, keep clean and work well, and chose a marbled effect, so it doesn't show any marks.

When the new work was done, I changed the wood surfaces by the sink – they were nice to start with but had quickly gone black. To match the flooring, I picked a speckled granite, which is brilliant and impervious to everything.

### What's your least favourite bit in the kitchen?

I don't much care for the tiles along the splashback, but it took me a while to realise that. I changed the colour of the walls several times when I first did the kitchen, choosing this pale terracotta to give the room warmth in the morning, when this west-facing room is less bright.

### Final thoughts?

For me, the kitchen is to do with life and family and people – and it's perfect now I have grandchildren. **GF**





The cooker and butler's sink are good-looking, hard-working essentials



Pretty china and a hand-painted table add to the informal feel



A favourite appliance – the warming oven is used for making stock overnight



This dresser houses all Josceline's colourful china, adding a cosy, rustic charm to the kitchen

## JOSCELINE'S TIPS

- Consider how you will use your kitchen. It was important to me to create a kitchen that would be a family room, but you'll have different requirements for the room if you prefer to be separate when you're cooking.
- When choosing your lighting, look at the different areas separately, to see how each one needs to be lit.
- Try to avoid having a wall right in front of the area where you do your preparing and cooking.
- Remember the golden triangle (sink, oven and preparation area) – think about moving easily between these three key places, so you don't have to walk across the room all the time.
- Choose materials for flooring and work surfaces that don't mark easily, and on which things won't shatter if they fall.
- Keep knives sharp by putting them in card covers or a knife block, and by sharpening them regularly with a whetstone.

## GET THE LOOK

Josceline uses lighting to great effect in her kitchen. Place this Valencia table lamp, Dh179 from Home centre, near the dining table for mood lighting.



Josceline's favourite graters are these Microplane Gourmet Graters (coarse and fine), Dhs89 for a pair at Crate and Barrel.



Keep pretty china, such as this Sanderson Porcelain Garden teapot, to create a homely feel in the kitchen. Dhs299 at Lakeland.



With three power levels, non-stick sides for easy cleaning, and a wire rack, the Kenwood mini electric oven is ideal for quick grilling and baking. Dhs129 at Jashanmal stores.





# Food Safari: Jordan

Each month, we dip into the UAE's multicultural melting pot to discover a new cuisine.

**O**mar Shihab, General Manager of Food Works Middle East (operator of various restaurants in the UAE) was born and bred in Dubai, but spent every summer holiday in his home country Jordan, where he split his time between the second largest city in the country, Irbid, and capital Amman. "My dad is originally from Irbid, while my mother is from a small town known as Salt, which is close to Amman," says Omar.

A family of foodies, Omar, his wife Doaa and even their two-year old daughter Thalia are all passionate about cooking. We headed over to their kitchen in their Dubai Motor City home, to have a chat with Omar, and get a taste of Jordanian cuisine.

## THE COUNTRY

Jordan is situated in Southwest Asia which is bordered by Syria on the south, Iraq on the west, Saudi Arabia or the northwest and Israel and West Bank to the east. The country has approximately 26

kilometres of its shoreline along the Gulf of Aqaba which provides access to the Red Sea. Jordan, as we learn from Omar, is split into the north and south, with the south being predominantly desert terrain, while the north has abundant vegetation.

Omar spent his childhood summers in his family farmhouse in a small village known as Malkawi in northern Jordan. Interestingly, Malkawi is also his family name back in Jordan. "Jordan is made up of small tribes and so the village or town you are from is included in your name as well – giving you an identity," Omar says. "I remember being out with my cousins and extended family all the time, near the farmhouse. We would go down the valleys with my youngest uncle – we needed adult supervision after all! – and would stumble on snakes and see wolves. It was all really adventurous and completely different from what I was exposed to here in Dubai," he says.

Omar's family owns acres of land in the region with a house nestled on top of a hill and a vineyard right below. "We even had our own production



team that would harvest olives – from olive trees that grew in the backyard – to produce extra virgin olive oil," Omar says. The harvest season takes place in October and November in the Northern region and people gather from all over the villages to harvest olives for production.

"My grandmother would travel from the south to the north, and get people together to help her with the harvest. I still receive these olive oil bottles; they are fresh and have a very distinct, strong taste. I use this oil mainly to drizzle over salads, but never to cook with, as it can be quite overpowering," says Omar.

## THE CUISINE

One of the best kept culinary secrets of the Levant region, Jordanian food has a distinctive identity, albeit with influences from bordering countries such as Lebanon or Syria. In fact some of their dishes can often be mistaken for Lebanese or Syrian; for instance, falafels, hoummous, moutabal and shawarmas are eaten in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, but in Jordan as well. "Jordan is a small country and was used as a trade route which is why the cuisine has been heavily influenced in many ways," Omar explains.

Wild herbs such as hedge mustard, pusley, malva and rumlex, as well as other herbs such as oregano, thyme and sage; aromatic spices including turmeric, cardamom, natural Arabic gum, and vegetables such as aubergines, okra and zucchini, are some of the most common ingredients in Jordanian dishes. This rich variety of produce is available as a result of the climatic conditions of the country, which are a bit dry with low humidity. Winters are harsh and cold, with little snowfall. "What's great about Jordan is that you can experience spring here as well, which is lovely, as this is when a lot of fresh produce and herbs are available. This is the time of year when people experiment with herbs and spices the most, for dishes," he says.



A typical meal in Jordan varies according to seasons as well. In winter, Jordanians prefer cooking comfort food such as heavy stews served with bread or rice and meat with hot yoghurt, whereas in summer and spring, the dishes are typically lighter with roasted vegetables, and chicken with rice, being the most popular choices.

While typical Jordanian dishes feature meat and chicken, seafood is popular in Aqab, which is a coastal town on the Red Sea.

Traditional dishes in Jordan include Zirb – a whole goat cooked for hours with hot coal, under the sand, and Mansaf – a rice based dish with lamb. “Whether it’s a wedding or graduation, mansaf is a communal dish that is prepared for just about any occasion,” he says.

In Jordan, every meal is accompanied with tea, Omar tells us. For breakfast there’s usually an assortment of falafel, hoummous and wild zaatar pastries – a dish he loves as his grandmother made it all the time. Lunch is typically a heavy meal and almost always includes a stew, while dinner is lighter, with the meal ending with a platter of fresh fruit, cheese and of course, a cup of tea.

## THE CULTURE

With its hearty, rustic nature, food forms a significant part of Jordanian culture. “When we aren’t eating, we are constantly thinking about what to cook or eat next,” Omar says. “Fine dining, however, is not really a part of our culture. Street food is more popular, as we like to grab a quick bite when we are out. Also, Jordanians don’t usually make snacks such as falafels and shawarmas at home, as there’s always a corner restaurant or shop that makes it really well.”

Living away from his home country, Omar, like many others, rues forgetting about certain traditions that may be getting lost over time. But when he took a sabbatical from work in 2011 to spend time in Jordan with his ailing father, he found himself exposed to a few traditions that he hadn’t previously come across, and some others which he had forgotten about over time. “My dad passed away in spring, and in Jordan, it is traditional for relatives to bring over food to the house where someone has passed away. I remember getting different dishes every day, but one day my aunts came over with six different freshly picked wild herbs. I had forgotten all about this tradition of relatives bringing ingredients to cook with over to your home as well, and was intrigued to see what they would do with these herbs. They sautéed them in garlic and a few other vegetables – it was delicious,” Omar says.



Omar with his daughter, a budding foodie, in his kitchen

Omar still goes back to Jordan on summer holidays for culinary inspiration

This episode in Omar’s life proved to be a turning point, as it triggered an eagerness to learn more about Jordanian cuisine and rediscover his passion for cooking.

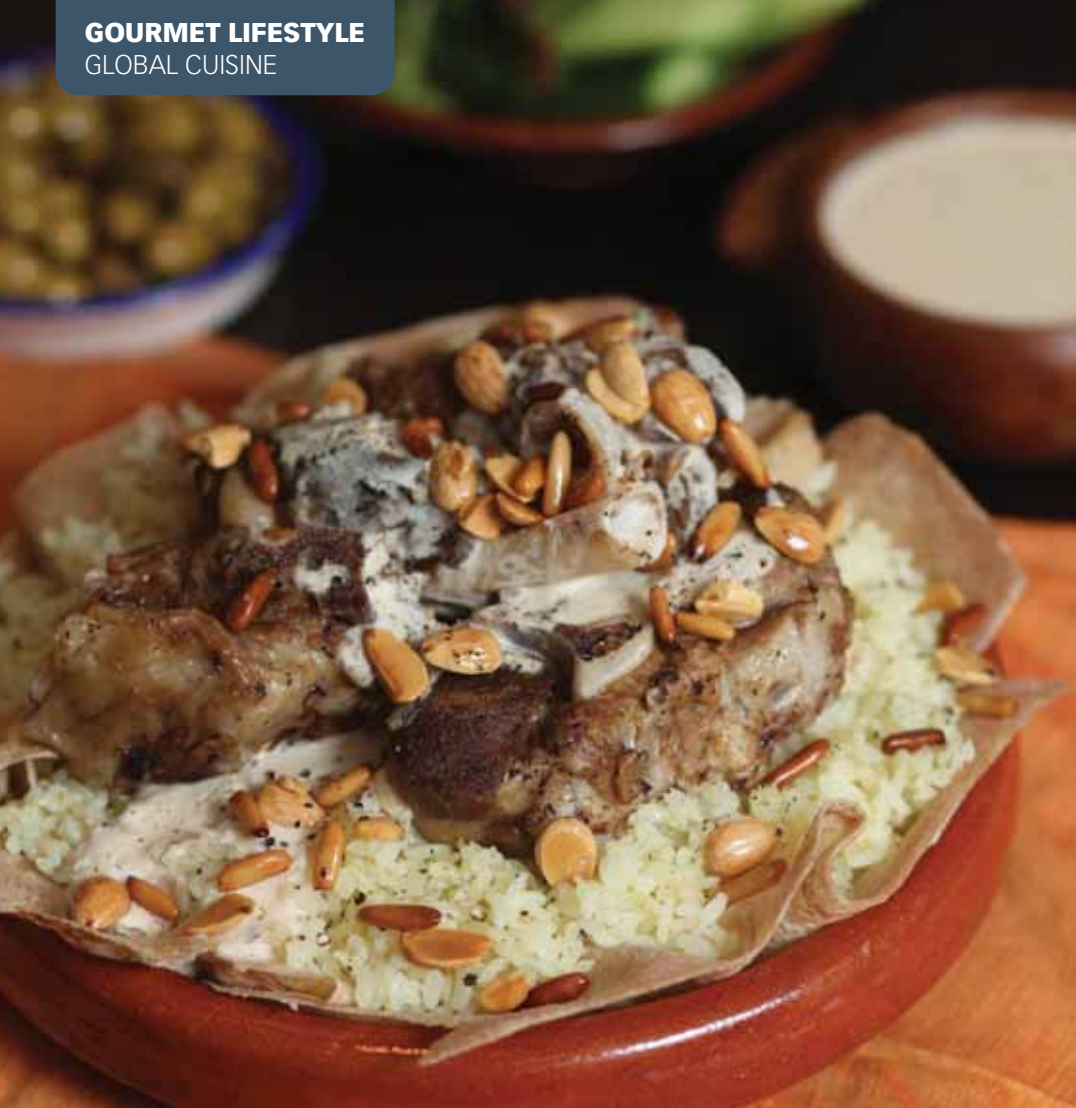
While he always loved food, Omar only started to appreciate it when he moved out of his family home in his 20s. “This is when I really started cooking and would call my parents to ask for certain recipes that I missed the taste of, and wanted to recreate. I would always see my father cooking in the kitchen, and I really liked that,” he says.

Since then, an appreciation of spices, herbs and seasonal produce came gradually to Omar – when he began cooking and started travelling around the world. “When I visited Italy with a close friend, we would drive around to farms and markets to shop for

fresh vegetables to cook with. There was an Italian mama who would bring a basket of fresh tomatoes and meat, and show us how to cook with it. This made me value the ingredients, herbs and vegetables grown back in Jordan, as I had never really cooked with the produce myself, but was aware of the variety that was available there,” he says. We got him to share two traditional recipes that showcase this diversity of the country’s cuisine. >>



Food was always central to family gatherings in his farmhouse



## Mansaf

SERVES 4

**1 lamb shoulder (about 1.5kg) cut into 6 pieces**  
**2 cups short grain rice**  
**1kg full-fat yoghurt (or a mixture of Jameed 'dry hard goat milk', available in specialty stores, and fresh yoghurt)**  
**3 small onions**  
**2 cardamom pods**  
**1 tsp cardamom powder**  
**1 tsp turmeric**  
**3 tbsp white flour**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**Fresh ground pepper**  
**Salt**  
**2 tbsp clarified butter**  
**50g pine nuts**  
**50g almond slivers**  
**Thin flatbread, to serve**

**1** Braise the lamb shoulder cutlets in a pot of water with the bay leaf, onion and 2 cardamom pods until tender. Strain and keep broth.

**2** Wash the rice and soak in hot water for 30 mins, then strain and keep aside.

**3** Heat the clarified butter, add strained rice and cook until the rice becomes translucent. Add turmeric, ½ tsp cardamom powder, and a pinch of salt to the rice. Pour 3½ cups of water and cover. Cook for 10 mins on high heat, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 mins.

**4** Mix white flour with the yoghurt, add a pinch of salt and ½ tsp cardamom powder. Place on medium to high heat and whisk until the mixture comes to a boil – keep mixing while on the heat. If using Jameed mixture, add the yoghurt at this point. Add 2 cups of the lamb broth and let the mixture simmer on medium heat for 30 mins.

**5** Light fry the pine nuts and almonds.

**6** Arrange flat bread on each plate then assemble the rice and lamb pieces. Spoon over yoghurt mixture and sprinkle pine nuts and almonds on top.

**7** Serve with a plate of whole greens (Rocca leaves, spring onions and radish) and pickles – these are classic sides for mansaf.



## Fresh wild zaatar pastries

SERVES 4

### FOR THE DOUGH

**2 cups white flour**  
**¾ cup warm full-fat milk**  
**¼ cup extra virgin olive oil**  
**¾ spoon dried yeast sachets**  
**2 tsp sugar**

**Pinch of sea salt**

### FOR THE WILD ZAATAR MIX

**200g fresh wild zaatar**  
**4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil**  
**2 small onions, finely chopped**  
**2 tsp sumac**  
**Salt and pepper**


**1** Mix and sieve flour and salt on to a clean work surface.

**2** In a jug, mix the yeast, sugar and olive oil into the milk and leave for a few minutes. Add to the flour mixture and with clean, flour-dusted hands, knead until you have a smooth, springy dough. Place the ball of dough in a large flour-dusted bowl and flour the top of the dough. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and place in a warm room for about an hour until the dough has doubled in size.

**3** While you wait for the dough to rise, mix all the ingredients of the fresh zaatar mix and set aside.

**4** Remove the dough on to a flour-dusted surface and knead it around a bit to push the air out with your hands. Divide the dough up into little balls and roll into triangles around double the size of your palm.

**5** Spoon some fresh zaatar mixture into the centre of each triangle and fold the dough over the mixture, so that the entire pastry is a triangle shape. Let them sit for 10-15 mins.

**6** In a pre-heated oven, bake the pastries for 15 minutes at 250C. Serve warm. 





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# Culinary Capital

The fifth edition of Gourmet Abu Dhabi 2013 is back this month! Here's a sneak peek at what to expect from the leading chefs who will be in attendance.

Highlighting the culinary skills and creativity of chefs through gala dinners, culinary demos and luncheons, brunches and themed dinners, Gourmet Abu Dhabi 2013 – taking place from February 5-20 at hotels across Abu Dhabi – is an event you do not want to miss! Here is a sneak peek into what the chefs participating in this year's event have planned for us.



**Rachel Allen, Celebrity chef, television personality and cookbook author**

"There is a great synergy between Ireland and the UAE, both countries have shared cultures of warm hospitality, and this is an incredible opportunity for me to experience the smells, flavours and tastes of Arabia. I'm thrilled to be Gourmet Abu Dhabi's Celebrity chef this year, and I'll be hosting a very

special celebrity dinner at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr on February 10. The menu I've designed includes some of my favourite dishes, from a fabulous smoked salmon starter to a main of sweet succulent roast lamb – all dishes reflecting Ireland's thriving food culture.

I will also be holding a three-course meal demonstration and luncheon at Frankie's restaurant, Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, the following day. One of my main goals during my visit is to learn how to incorporate the use of spices such as sumac and saffron into my cooking, which I can bring back to Ireland to share. Who knows, you may see a definite Arabic influence in my next cookbook!"

**Shinichiro Takagi, owner and head chef at Zeniya restaurant, Japan**

"Japanese Kaiseki cuisine is considered a 'fine-art' cuisine, and is a multi-course seasonal tradition that has evolved alongside tea-making ceremonies dating back to the 16th century. Comprising of a series of small, predominantly fish-centric courses, kaiseki is now at the pinnacle of Japanese gastronomic culture. Diners will be able to experience this cuisine from February 6-9 at the Park Rotana's Teatro restaurant.

This is my first visit to the region, and I've recently discovered that local Arabic coffee preparation involves the use of cardamom – which provides health benefits similar to those achieved by drinking green tea. I am very interested in learning more about this, and would relish the opportunity to master the skill of Arabic coffee making while I am in Abu Dhabi."



**Imtiaz Qureshi, International masterchef and owner of multiple restaurants in India**

"As the guest chef at Indigo, Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi from February 16-19, I will be introducing the slow-cooked Dum Pukht tradition – a heritage cuisine of India. I come from a family of chefs who were the official cooks to the Mughul emperors 200 years ago. My two sons, who are also Grand Master Chefs of the cuisine, will be joining me, and are looking forward to sharing views on food, as well as exploring the links between Emirati and Indian cuisine, by collaborating with Emirati chef Khulood Atiq."



**Brent Savage, co-owner and head chef of Bentley bar and restaurant, Sydney**

"Gourmet Abu Dhabi is now a world-renowned event, and it's a real privilege to be invited to participate. I will be creating a seven-course dinner with each meal including the luxurious ingredient, caviar, alongside Etihad Airways' corporate executive chef Thomas Ulherr at the exclusive 'Etihad Airways Caviar and bubbles

dinner which will be held at the ultra-glamorous five-star Yas Viceroy Abu Dhabi on February 15."

**Jason Black, executive chef at Shore Steakhouse, and founder of The Salted Pig restaurant, Hong Kong**


"My team and I have put together a menu that represents the techniques used at our restaurants in Hong Kong, as well as that of Blue Grill, Yas Island Rotana, where we will be hosting a Culinary demonstration and lunch."



**Abhijeet Saha, owner and chef, Caperberry and Fava restaurants, Bangalore**

"I'll be making my debut at the event as the guest chef at Ushna in Abu Dhabi's Souk Qaryat Al Beri. I'm a fan of molecular cuisine so will be showing guests how molecular cuisine is not a fad or a recent invention, but has been used in traditional Indian cuisine for hundreds of years. I'm also going to be exploring the possibilities of opening a restaurant in the Abu Dhabi."

**Chumpol Jangprai, Thai culinary director, Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas**

"I'm going to seize this opportunity to incorporate new ingredients from the region such as lamb, saffron and dates, either mixed with tamarind paste for salty dishes or as a taste enhancer for desserts, in Thai recipes. I'll be preparing Thai crispy pancakes from mung bean and stuffing at my culinary demonstrations, which will be introduced across all Anantara properties in UAE." 







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## Happy flying!

Taking a flight out of Dubai just got a lot more interesting with the opening of five new outlets at the airport, to coincide with the opening of the new Concourse A. Marking more than one first, the new section of the airport will see the first Giraffe restaurant outside UK – a family friendly option – as well as the first Heineken lounge outside North America. It is also home to the world's first branded champagne bar if you're after luxe lounging, as well as the very first themed Jack's bar & grill.

The Four Seasons hotels and resorts group has recently launched a new epicurean website aimed at their food-loving customers.

Taste.fourseasons.com is a global online foodie community where you can not only find recipes from their leading chefs around the world – featured in a '1 ingredient, 3 ways' series – but also find personal stories from chefs and sommeliers, and Epic Dining experiences highlighting gastronomical adventures (lobster diving in Nevis, anyone?). Aptly described as a "gathering place for fellow lovers of food and drink", the website focuses on interactivity with reader voting on content and photo-sharing options.



A taste for every season

# TASTE OF THE WORLD

All the foodie news from around the globe.

## Wine and Dine in Madeira

Looking for a Valentine getaway with a foodie twist? Look no further than The Vine, a designer hotel in Funchal on the scenic island of Madeira. Inspired by the local vines used to make the renowned Madeira wine, the hotel offers the perfect formula for a romantic escape – spend the day hiking amidst the lush forested hiking trails, followed by a couple's Vinotherapy spa treatment, to top it all up with an unforgettable meal at the rooftop restaurant Uva, where three Michelin-starred chef Antoine Westermann will spoil you with French-style food using regional produce, accompanied by harbour views. We're falling in love with the idea already! Package prices start from E190 (around Dhs930) for one night, visit [designhotels.com/romantic\\_escapes](http://designhotels.com/romantic_escapes) for more.

## CARNIVAL TIME!

If there was ever a time to visit Sicily, it is now! Awash with carnivals and festivals, the colourful region is playing host to the Sagra del Mandorlo (Almond Blossom Festival) in Fiore between February 1-10, during which you can indulge in traditional music, folk dances and fireworks to celebrate the start of the planting season.

There's no better way to immerse yourself in the festivities than to stay in a self-catered villa – gather your friends, book into the Villa Elena, a six-bedroom property situated amongst the olive groves of Agrigento, and live like a local! Prices start from E3,500 (around Dhs17,300) for a week (the villa sleeps 12), visit [www.soloSicily.com](http://www.soloSicily.com) for details.





# A Taste of Travel

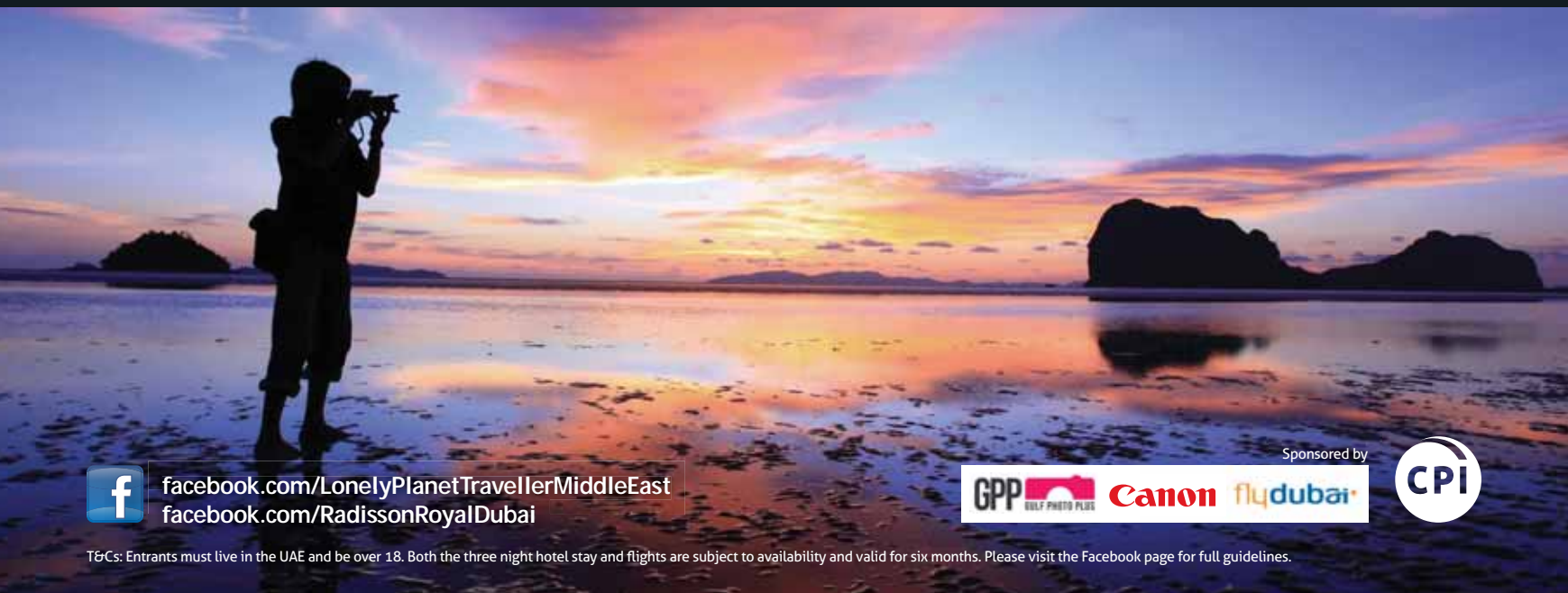
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**H**ong Kong is full of surprises. So much more than the bustling, neon-lit streets that the city is associated with – more than 40 per cent of the city's land is made up of parklands – it is a complete sensory delight, with sights, sounds, smells that are uniquely its own. Chinese traditions collide with British influences in this colourful, pulsating city, and nowhere else is this more evident than in its culinary offerings. From Michelin-star rated hole in the wall restaurants, to the ultimate in European sophistication, and home restaurants (where home cooks open up their kitchens for small groups of people to sample authentic food), the gastronomic landscape here is varied, to say the least. Whether you're in Hong Kong for a week or are passing through on a short stopover, here is our pick of what to tick off your list.

### 1 LUXURY DINING

If you want to try authentic, traditional Cantonese in an elegant setting, look no further than the Michelin starred T'ang Court restaurant, at the Langham hotel. With its lavish décor – think silk drapes and contemporary art on display – you are guaranteed a dining experience as opulent as the renowned ruling dynasty the restaurant is named after. Expert chef Siu Hin Chui is at the helm of the kitchens, which serves up a vast menu (it is 12 pages long!) featuring delicacies like Stewed fresh abalone with Beche-de-Mer and black mushrooms and Cambodia noodles with shredded duck, black mushrooms and preserved vegetables in soup, utilising only the freshest produce and time-tested cooking techniques. You will find plenty of delicious options that you are familiar with, but if you're adventurously inclined, then you won't be disappointed with everything from snake soup to fried pig's ear on offer!

In spite of the refined status of the restaurant, you will get good food served in a fuss-free manner – with sharing encouraged – guaranteeing an authentic experience. Visit [hongkong.langhamhotels.com](http://hongkong.langhamhotels.com) for more.

### 2 STREET-STYLE FEAST

Street food is probably the best way to explore any Asian city's culinary offerings, and Hong Kong is no exception. While you're sure to get the tempting aromas of stir fries and dim sum wafting through most streets of Kowloon and Central, make your way to SoHo, the nightlife hub of the >>

# 3 to try: HongKong

These foodie experiences are a must if you find yourself in this vibrant Asian city.

Hong Kong has built up around its iconic harbour



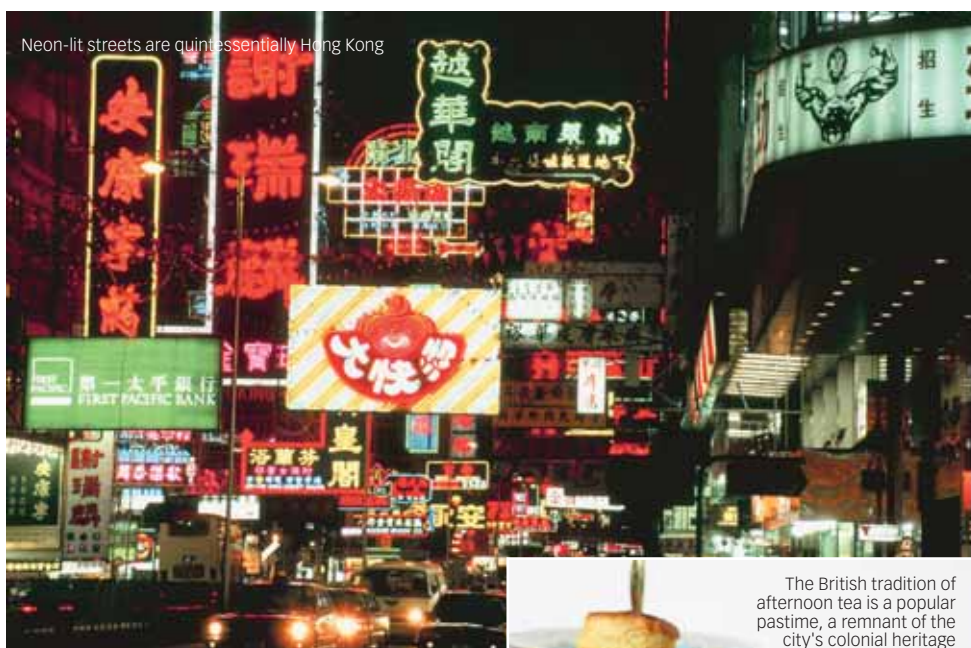
T'ang Court offers gourmet dining in a luxe setting



SoHo is a food and nightlife hub



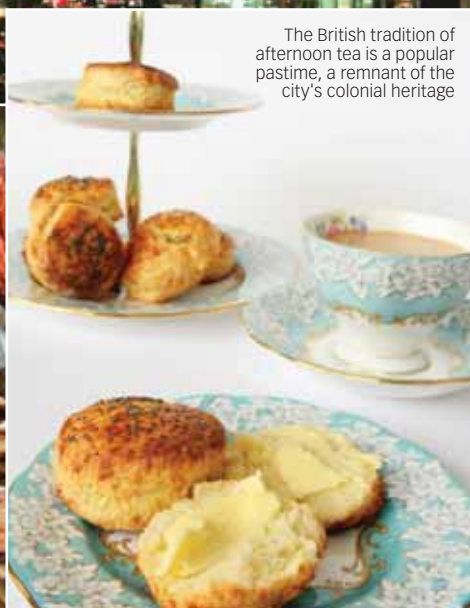




Neon-lit streets are quintessentially Hong Kong



Street food is the best way to eat your way through Asia



The British tradition of afternoon tea is a popular pastime, a remnant of the city's colonial heritage

city, for an unforgettable night of food and drink. Start with an authentic home-style meal at the Zhong Guo Song Chinese restaurant (6, Wo On Lane, Central. Tel: 28104040) – a tiny outlet with three tables cramped in at best, where you won't mind bumping against your neighbour each time you turn, because the food is just to die for. Whether it's a simple broccoli stir fry, or an assortment of dim sum, the simple, hearty, fresh flavours will keep you coming back for more. The super-affordable prices will leave you enough to splash out on a bar-hopping spree across SoHo's numerous bars – from Irish pubs to edgy lounges with live bands – which spill out on the narrow streets that cling on to the hillside (the best way to get here is via the Mid Levels escalator, once renowned as the world's longest) with crumbling commercial and residential buildings precariously teetering at its edges. Popular with western expats and tourists alike, SoHo offers a fun, unpretentious experience that you shouldn't miss.

### 3 TEA-TIME TREAT

An excellent example of the influence the British have had on the Hong Kong culture is the popularity of afternoon teas. Many leading hotels offer their versions of it, but the Peninsula Afternoon Tea is something of an institution in the city. You will find queues stretching across the lobby of this prestigious hotel every afternoon, so booking ahead is necessary. With the plush yet understated ambience instantly transporting you back to another era, the ritual of afternoon tea, served by white-gloved waiters naturally, includes choices of different teas and an array of sandwiches, cakes and pastries on a three-tier tray and fine silverware. A real holiday indulgence! ☞

## TRAVEL DIARY

first grand hotel in 1865, exudes opulent sophistication with exquisite design and attention to detail in every space, from the inviting lobby to the ultra-luxurious rooms – which come kitted out with all conceivable mod cons. A suite booking also includes access to the Langham Club, a gorgeous haven of relaxation where you can breakfast in privacy, catch up on emails, or grab a cocktail for sundowners, in a designer setting surrounded by artisan furniture and carefully curated artworks. Room rates start from HKD3,650 (approx. Dhs1,730), visit [hongkong.langhamhotels.com](http://hongkong.langhamhotels.com).

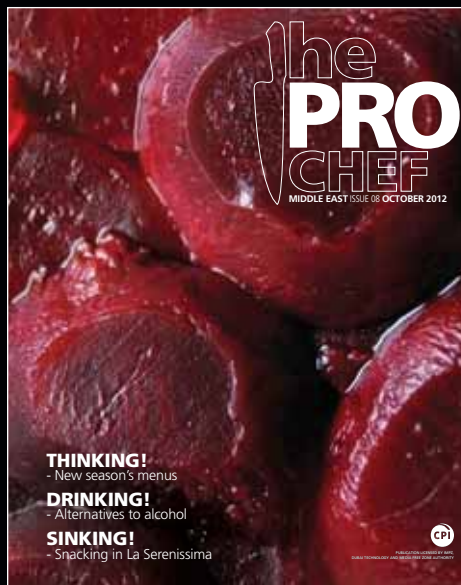
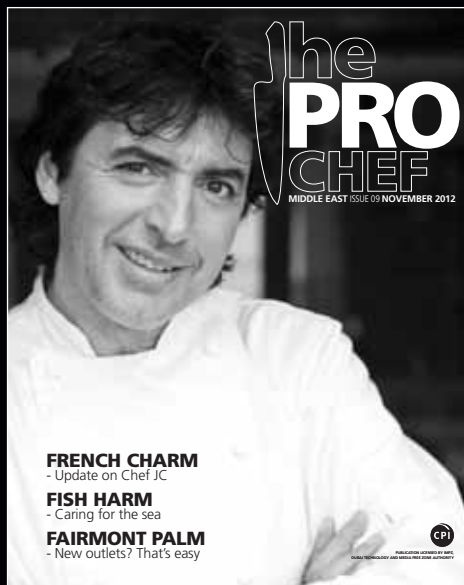
**HOW TO GET THERE:** Cathay Pacific offers convenient direct flights from Dubai and Abu Dhabi to Hong Kong. Book in for a business class flight (which is surprisingly affordable, with prices starting from around Dhs7,500), to enjoy flat bed seats and personalised service. Visit [cathaypacific.com](http://cathaypacific.com).

**WHERE TO STAY:** The Langham, Hong Kong is a luxe, urban oasis in the heart of Kowloon, that offers a tranquil sanctuary in a central location, just minutes from the Victoria Harbour, with easy access to the ferry terminal. The landmark hotel, part of the Langham group which opened Europe's





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# Postcard from Porto

Portugal's historic second city is home to stunning food and port lodges that take you back in time, Marina O'Loughlin discovers.

**M**y affair with Portugal is a late blossomer – it's easy to get waylaid by the more obvious pleasures of its Mediterranean neighbours. But the more I see, the more it snakes its ways into my affections.

For one thing, I can't believe how unsung its wines are: *vinhão* and *alvarinho* are every bit as luscious as *rioja* and *albariño*, but not nearly as well-known. In Porto, we're staying at The Yeatman hotel ([the-yeatman-hotel.com](http://the-yeatman-hotel.com)), a luxury swankpot with more than just a killer view across the river Douro. Beds are carved out of oversized wine barrels and there's a bottle-shaped swimming pool. Yes, folks, the Yeatman is all about the vino: the cellars groan with one of the world's greatest collections of Portuguese wines.

We pitch up to one of its regular Thursday wine dinners, each one hosted by a different producer – ours is the celebrated Dona Maria from the Alentejo. We're fed course after course of elaborate dishes created by the hotel's Michelin-starred chef Ricardo Costa whilst being guided through the vintages by chic young wine director, Beatriz Machado. It's a delicious, somewhat blurry blowout.

The Yeatman is on the south bank of the river, as are all the major port lodges; they form a unique urban landscape. We choose historic Taylor's ([taylor.pt](http://taylor.pt)) for our mandatory visit, a few hours of shady vines, fragrant, ancient barrels – the flavour of the wood is not desired – and fortified wines: the caramelised orange and almond notes of everyday glugger, tawny port; dry white Chip, a perfect aperitif. Taylor's own invention, the late-bottled vintage is a dream with cheese.

The Douro's banks are lined with bars and restaurants, but most are tourist magnets. Porto's steep, cobbled streets reward the explorer however, with gems like local culinary whizz Rui Paula's DOP ([ruipaula.com](http://ruipaula.com)), for instance. His modern, thoughtful menu delivers refined versions of traditional dishes like *tripas à moda* and Porto's beloved *francesinha* (an über croque monsieur with ham, cheese, sausage and spiced beer and tomato sauce) in the setting of a beautiful, 14th-century building.

Next, we try a cute, off-piste little townhouse, Solar Moinho de Vento ([solarmoinhodevento.com](http://solarmoinhodevento.com)). Fado music plays in the background, and food is unabashedly old-school Porto – *linguadinhos tritos* (small, fried sole); *pataniscas* (cod fritters); vast metal saucepans of *açorda* (bread porridge) or *arroz malandrino* (a soupy rice dish), plonked on the table. I'm enchanted by the wrinkled little ladies who run the kitchen, industrious and smiley. Little wonder – they appear to be entirely fuelled by port.

Like Lisbon, Porto bristles with Art Nouveau shop fronts – delicious chocolatier Arcádia ([arcadia.pt](http://arcadia.pt)), for instance, its interior unchanged since 1933 – and bars trapped in time. Fifties gem Café Ceuta ([cafeceuta.pai.pt](http://cafeceuta.pai.pt)) perhaps, where we have 'liquid marzipan' *amarguinha*. Or Café

Guarany ([cafeguarany.com](http://cafeguarany.com)) in the main square, across from a hilariously opulent, chandeliered McDonald's, where your toastie and *pastel de nata* are delivered to marble-topped tables by waiters dressed for The Titanic. And that's before I even touch on the outrageously gorgeous Majestic ([cafemajestic.com](http://cafemajestic.com)), with its elaborate mirrors and ceiling covered with fat, romping cherubs. There isn't a lovelier place to wallow in the unabashedly calorific *francesinha*.

Equally time-warped is Mercado do Bolhão, its scruffy, ramshackle air hiding all sorts of treasures. I love Leandro's for pungent sausages and *paio lombo* (smoked pork loin); and stalls laden with *bacalhau* or dense, brown Avintes rye bread. Upstairs, the market is even more evocative – butchers selling *pernil* (smoked pig's knee) are guarded by cages of live songbirds. Outside the market is Rua Formosa – a street where every second store is an immaculate, perfectly-preserved vintage grocery store serving candied fruits, sausages and addictive meat pastries known as *pasteis chaves*.

In the Bombarda art district, we reject the lures of the chic bars that line these gallery-crammed streets, heading instead to Churrasqueira Domingos ([churrasqueiradomingos.com](http://churrasqueiradomingos.com)) for Portugal's signature rotisserie chicken. Imagine a







Nando's where the food is cooked by angels and you're close – vast platters of sensationally smoky chicken and heaps of crisp, yellow chips with a half bottle of vinho verde for 11 €? Oh, yes!

And we can't get enough of the old fisherman's district, Matosinhos, where outdoor grills belch smoke and sardines. In slightly more upmarket Mariazinha (restaurantmariazinha.com) there's a wall of wine bottles with a TV perched nearby and a gentlemanly senior waiter.

A whole meal's worth of freebies arrives before we even hit main courses – think rissóis de camarão (a blissful, prawn-stuffed crisp pancake), bread filled with cheese and ham, and marinated octopus. Plates heaving with fresh shellfish are served next, then mains of seafood rice, cabrito (kid, a typically northern dish), and posta Mirandesa (a mammoth veal steak with a piquant garlic and wine vinegar sauce).

Plus, of course, plenty of local wine. And port. Porto isn't a fling, it's a keeper.



## TRY THIS

### Francesinha

SERVES 2 • 25 MINUTES **Easy** **P** **I**

*This sandwich means 'Frenchie' in Portuguese and traditionally comes with a tomato and beer sauce. It's not for the faint-hearted.*

- 2 minute steaks, fat trimmed**
- 2 chipolata sausages, halved lengthways**
- 4 slices of white bread**
- 2 slices cooked ham**
- 4 slices linguica (smoked sausage) or salami**
- 4 slices cheese (use a melting cheese like Swiss or Monterey Jack)**

#### Gravy

- ½ onion, finely chopped**
- olive oil**
- 500ml pilsner beer**
- chicken stock cube**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 2 tbsp tomato purée**
- 1 tbsp cornflour**

**1** To make the gravy, fry the onion in a little olive oil until soft. Cook the steak and sausage in the same pan then lift out and keep warm. Add the beer, stock cube, bay leaves and tomato purée and bring to a simmer. Cook for 5 mins until the alcohol flavour is cooked out. Add a little water to the cornflour to make a paste and then stir this into the gravy, simmer until it thickens a little, then season. Remove the bay leaves and blend the gravy until smooth.

**2** Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan. Make two sandwiches using the bread and meats and put each in an ovenproof dish. Lay the cheese on top of the sandwiches and pour over the gravy. Bake for 15 mins until the cheese melts.

PER SERVING 846 kcal, protein 56.5g, carbs 40.7g, fat 42.9g, sat fat 19.6g, fibre 2.7g, salt 4.7g **BF**

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# Bon Appétit experiences at Okku

Emirates NBD card holders enjoyed yet another Bon Appétit experience hosted by *BBC Good Food Middle East* – a private evening of drinks and canapés at the trendy restaurant, with Chef Hugh Sato Gardiner conducting a Masterclass in contemporary Japanese cuisine. Here are the snapshots from the evening, as well as some recipes and tips from the chef. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Chef Hugo Sato Gardiner cooked up three delicious dishes



BBC Good Food ME editor Sudeshna Ghosh introduces Chef Hugo



Chef Hugo shared valuable tips and tricks on Asian cooking with the audience



Guests enjoyed drinks and sampled tasters of the dishes the chef showcased



One guest walked away with a Dhs1,000 dining voucher from Okku at the raffle draw



Another lucky raffle draw winner received a Kenwood blender



Guests enjoyed a social evening, mingling with each other and members of the bank's management team



The 'Bon Appétit Experience' is an extension of the 'Bon Appétit' programme that was launched last year by Emirates NBD, which enables premium cardholders to enjoy exclusive discounts at over 600 restaurants in the UAE, when they use their Emirates NBD Debit or Credit Card.





## Sesame soy burdock and lettuce salad

SERVES 4

280g burdock  
60g carrots  
60ml nikiri sake (alcohol burnt off)  
60ml mirin-fu (non-alcoholic)  
20ml dark soy  
20ml light soy  
4g sugar  
1.4g shichimi  
32ml sesame oil  
20ml grapeseed oil  
60g purple cabbage  
120g white cabbage  
32g carrot  
200g lettuce heart  
60g button mushrooms, sliced  
20g kaiware  
32ml balsamic vinegar  
32ml olive oil  
1g salt  
4g salt

32g lemon wedge  
4g sesame seeds  
.4g shichimi

- 1 Cut the burdock and carrot into 4cm long strips, with a thickness of 3mm. Soak in cold water for 15 mins.
- 2 Drain and add the sesame and grapeseed oil and sauté the burdock and carrot till al dente, add 10ml of water to steam. Then add sake, mirin, dark soy, light soy, sugar, hondashi, and shichimi. Cook till the liquid has dissolved completely.
- 3 Place in GN9 and ice bath to bring down temperature.
- 4 Combine cabbage, carrot, lettuce with oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper.
- 5 Place the cabbage salad in a serving bowl, and add sliced mushrooms on top. Squeeze fresh lemon juice over. Add the chilled sesame soy burdock on top of salad. Garnish with sesame seeds, shichimi, and kaiware sprout and serve.

### Shopping tip

Most of the specialty ingredients in the recipes are available at specialty Asian stores such as Dean's in Karama (04-3370503) or 1004 Mart in Al Barsha (04-3234536).

## Seabass carpaccio

SERVES 4

240g seabass  
60ml lemon juice  
4g wasabi  
40ml olive oil  
100g salt  
32g cherry tomatoes  
12g arugula  
12g kaiware sprouts  
12g red onions  
40g black pepper  
12ml balsamic vinegar  
4g basil

### FOR THE BALSAMIC SOY MIX

32ml grapeseed oil  
4g yellow mustard  
20ml soy sauce

- 1 Cut the seabass fillet into 8 pieces. Place on cling film and pound until it reaches a rectangular shape about 3mm thick. Remove cling film and place on a plate.
- 2 Pour the lemon juice over the fish to begin the curing. Using the tip of your knife, spread a little wasabi over all the fish slices. Combine all the ingredients for the balsamic soy mix.
- 3 Pour some olive oil over the entire dish, and then add the balsamic soy mix to the fish pieces. Season and set aside.
- 4 Cut the cherry tomato into 5 slices, and place on the fish plate.
- 5 In a bowl, toss together the arugula, kaiware, onions, balsamic vinegar, and olive oil. Place the salad on top of the carpaccio and tear the basil leaf into pieces to garnish.



### INGREDIENT INFO What is burdock?

- Burdock root (gobo) is a root vegetable similar to artichokes, that is amazingly good for health. Rich in Vitamin C, chromium, magnesium and mercury, burdock has a naturally detoxifying effect.

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- **Access to exciting competitions**
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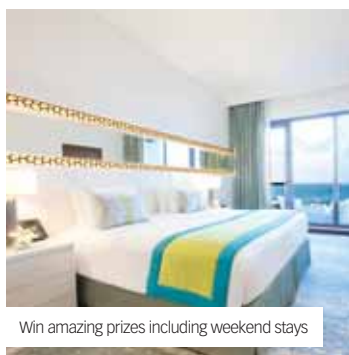
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Visit [www.bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://www.bbcgoodfoodme.com) and sign up today.



## What they said

Feedback from our Food Club members:

👉 Huge compliments to the team for a stunning Masterclass event. They are presented so professionally and are a fantastic showcase for the chefs and their restaurants. 🍷 – Paul Conroy

👉 Thank you for the invitation to the Masterclass. We really enjoyed ourselves and look forward to replicating the menu when we next have friends over. 🍷 – Liz Sandford

👉 Just wanted to say thanks very much for another wonderful, educational and tasty evening. My husband and I are very grateful to be able to attend these events. 🍷 – Annette Duke



Present your Food Club membership card at these outlets to receive a **fabulous discount!**



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**LEILA RESTAURANT**

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**MELIA DUBAI**

This Bur Dubai hotel is known for its popular restaurants Titanic by Marco Pierre White, and Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor.

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The glamorous hotel in the heart of the city has three fine-dining outlets: Center Cut, Can Can Brasseur and Blue Rain.

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**MEDIA ONE HOTEL**

This modern hotel in Dubai Media City offers contemporary dining outlets including Café M, Z:One and The Deck on 8.

Discount: 20% off F&B at all outlets  
[www.mediaonehotel.com](http://www.mediaonehotel.com)



**MOVENPICK BUR DUBAI**

Located in central Dubai, the hotel's outlets include authentic North Indian restaurant Chutneys, and Fountain.

Discount: 20% off food only  
[www.movenpick-hotels.com](http://www.movenpick-hotels.com)



**AL RAHA BEACH HOTEL**

Set on the corniche, the hotel's outlets are Sevilla, Azur, Café Mozart, Black Pearl Bazar, Enigma, Wanasah and Al Manzil.

Discount: 25% off F&B at all outlets  
[www.danathotels.com](http://www.danathotels.com)



**LE ROYAL MERIDIEN ABU DHABI**

This luxurious five-star hotel has gourmet restaurants including Amalfii, Al Fanar, and L'Opera.

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**KITSCH CUPCAKES**

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**DANAT AL AIN RESORT**

The resort's restaurants include Arabesque, Luce, Tanjore, The Wok, and Shooters.

Discount: 25% off F&B at all outlets  
[www.danathotels.com](http://www.danathotels.com)



**DANAT JEBEL DHANNA RESORT**

The beach resort's outlets include Tides, Zaitoun, C View café and Latitude bar.

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[www.danathotels.com/JebelDhanna](http://www.danathotels.com/JebelDhanna)



**SANDS HOTEL**

This Abu Dhabi hotel's restaurants include LaPiazza, Harvesters Pub, Chequers, Tipar Bar and Cappuccino Royal Café.

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[www.danathotels.com](http://www.danathotels.com)



**TILAL LIWA HOTEL**

Located amidst secluded dunes off the Rub Al Khali desert, the hotel's restaurants are Al Badiya, Layali Bar, and Al Liwan.

Discount: 25% off F&B outlets  
[www.danathotels.com](http://www.danathotels.com)

\*Terms & conditions apply.

# Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.



## WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CERTO, RADISSON BLU HOTEL, DUBAI MEDIA CITY, WORTH DHS550

One lucky couple can enjoy a romantic four-course set menu at this Italian eatery on Valentine's Day, and indulge in classics including pastas oozing with cheese and decadent chocolate and fruit desserts. A glass of rosé bubbly will be given on arrival, along with a special gift for the ladies, to make the night even more memorable.

## WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT ROCOCO, SOFITEL JUMEIRAH BEACH, WORTH DHS500

One lucky winner can take a friend along to this elegant restaurant, and indulge in award-winning cuisine and beverages.



## WIN! HEALTHY DINNER FOR TWO AT MAZINA, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA, WORTH DHS350

One lucky winner can take a dining partner along to the all-new Eat Right, Live Right night, that takes place every Tuesday. Indulge in a nutritious vegetarian buffet which includes Mongolian style dishes, sushi, pastas as well as other vegetarian options such as Moroccan vegetable tagine, goat cheese and asparagus quiche, and a variety of tempting desserts.



## WIN! DINING VOUCHER WORTH DHS400 AT AMWAJ, SHANGRI-LA DUBAI

This glamorous bistro serves a seafood menu with a focus on European cooking. Indulge in daily specials and set menus that include dishes such as red snapper with zucchini cream, and rosemary-roasted eel, all of which can be paired with wines from the cellar.

## WIN! DINING VOUCHER WORTH DHS400, AT CHILI'S

Grab your friends and family and head out to this family-friendly restaurant to try out dishes such as the Roasted pepper chicken with melted jalapeno Jack cheese topped with red pepper sauce, and Chipotle salmon with South western spices and smoky chipotle cream sauce, as part of the Pepperfiction dining experience, with flavours ranging from sweet and mild to hot and smoky – available for a limited period only.



## WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CRAVE, HILTON DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH RESORT, WORTH DHS290

One lucky winner and a partner can try out the set menu at any one of the theme nights at this casual, all-day dining restaurant, which offers cuisines ranging from Arabic, Asian, Eastern European and Mediterranean. With a juicy steak night on Thursday, fresh seafood night on Friday, and a theme night for every other day of the week to choose from, there is an option to suit every taste.

To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on [www.bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://www.bbcgoodfoodme.com), or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.





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Arabic Tea & Coffee - Soft Drinks & Refreshments - Henna Painting  
Tattoos & lots more entertainment throughout the evening

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## Miniature memoirs

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THEMES CAN BE CUSTOMISED TO ORDER





Health and safety environment consultant **JASMINE PEREIRA** was born and bred in Dubai, but is a native Indian, hailing from Mangalore. Currently living in Abu Shagara – in the heart of Sharjah – with her family, the 22-year old enjoys reading and learning about new cultures and cuisines, considers herself a movie buff and is always snapping pictures of her scrumptious looking dishes – food photography is one of her fondest hobbies – for her blog.

## Culinary icons

My mother! She has a knack for creating flavoursome dishes and has always been awe-inspiring. My mum has no fear when it comes to trying new ingredients in a dish which may otherwise seem out of the norm.

**Fondest food memory**  
Sitting at a cosy seafood shack in Cyprus fronted by the Mediterranean Sea, when I was there on holiday a few years ago. I remember tucking into the catch of the day, cooked with simple Mediterranean ingredients. The seafood was fresh and delicious!

# Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

## \*About the blog

Pear Tree Food Diaries was launched on a summer's night in 2012 when I decided I needed a platform to share my love for food and passion for baking. The name Pear tree is a Portuguese translation of my surname Pereira, and because of its foodie connection, I thought it made a perfect fit! The blog features restaurant reviews, as well as a collection of recipes combined with my own cooking experiences stirred up in the kitchen. Through the blog I try to cater to people's cooking needs or simply help them treat their tastebuds to a new experience or cuisine. I love dining out which is why the restaurant review element is important to me. I talk about where to dine, what dishes to try at a certain venues and which restaurants are best for a particular type of cuisine.

*“ I love a drizzle of truffle oil over mashed potatoes and sautéed mushrooms. It's definitely one of my food luxuries. ”*

**THIS VALENTINE'S DAY,**  
**I'M INDULGING IN** Homemade lobster with lemon butter sauce, and chocolate Kahlua fondant for dessert.

## Favourite cuisine

It's always a battle choosing a favourite cuisine, but when it comes down to the core of my taste buds I would say Thai, as it encompasses everything I like to offer my palate.

## Top cooking tips

- \* When baking cakes and cookies, add a pinch of nutmeg to give it a subtle, sweet taste.
- \* When marinating chicken, add a teaspoon of dark treacle to give it a deeper colour.
- \* A drizzle of sesame oil in shrimp salads or stir-fries adds a toasty flavour.



## My favourite midday snack fix

A homemade granola bar, mixed nuts or just some fresh fruit.

## Catch me dining at...

More Café for their More eggs Benedict over **breakfast**.

Ping Pong Dim Sum restaurant for the Chicken char siu bun and crispy prawn balls for **lunch**.

Lemongrass Thai restaurant for the Gai hor bai teuy (Pandan chicken) and my all-time favourite Panang curry at **dinnertime**.

## I would love to dine with

Nigella Lawson! I've always been fascinated with her and her cooking. She is one woman that never shies away from a generous helping of butter and oil when cooking. I would treat her to my favourite dish – cashew chicken curry.







Häcker, the definitive German luxury kitchen company, dedicated to designing and crafting the world's most desirable kitchens.



## *Dedicated to all Valentines*



*It is madness, says reason  
It is what it is, says love  
It is unhappiness, says caution  
It is nothing but pain, says fear  
It has no future, says insight  
It is what it is, says love  
It is ridiculous, says pride  
It is foolish, says caution  
It is impossible, says experience  
It is what it is, says love.*

*Erich Fried*



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